

Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



Property from an American Collector

1

Mezcala Stone Female Figure, Type M22

Late Preclassic, circa 300 - 100 BC

Estimate: 25,000 - 35,000 EUR

† VAT reduced rate

DESCRIPTION

Property from an American Collector

Mezcala Stone Female Figure, Type M22
Late Preclassic, circa 300 - 100 BC

Height: 7 in (17.8 cm)

PROVENANCE

André Emmerich, New York (inv. no. G-25)
Isidor Kahane, New York, acquired from the above on May 6,
1958
Thence by descent

LITERATURE

Miguel Covarrubias, *Mezcala, Ancient Mexican Sculpture*,
Andre Emmerich Gallery, New York, 1956, p. 15
Miguel Covarrubias and Andre Emmerich, "Mezcala Stone
Sculpture," in *Craft Horizons*, February, 1957, vol. XVII, no. 1, p.
25
Carlo Gay and Frances Pratt, *Mezcala, Ancient Stone Sculpture
from Guerrero, Mexico*, Geneva, 1992, p. 217, Pl. 268b

CATALOGUE NOTE

Mezcala sculptors combined abstraction, stylization and naturalism particularly in the treatment of anthropomorphic figures. Axe-like stones carved with an expressive series of angles and grooves, transformed into ephemeral human forms which impressed 20th century modernists such as Henry Moore for their timelessness.

This Mezcala figure, densely carved in speckled and polished diorite, exemplifies the use of the firm diagonal lines with the subtly rounded breasts, demarcated hands and the prominent, sharp-jawed head.

Females are rare among the corpus of Mezcala figural sculptures as most are asexual representations, not dissimilar to the majority of portable Olmec stone figures (Carlo Gay and Frances Pratt, *Mezcala: Ancient Stone Sculpture from Mexico*, Geneva, 1992, p. 101).

Mezcala was first studied in the 1920s by the Mexican artist and collector Miguel Covarrubias, who integrated a scholarly approach along with an artistic appreciation of the evocative lithic stones. Covarrubias included the present impressive example in his publication, *Mezcala: Ancient Mexican Sculpture*, 1956, p. 15. In the 1960s, Carlo T. E. Gay continued classifying the distinctive substyles. These efforts were brought to a fore in the historic exhibition, *Mezcala Stone Sculpture: The Human Figure*, at the Museum of Primitive Art in New York.

As Josef Albers aptly commented on the aesthetics of the art of early Mexico "...truly a lesson in the economy of artistic articulation, as art is an act of condensation" (Lauren Hinkson, *Josef Albers in Mexico*, 2017, p. 19).

For a close parallel, see Gay and Pratt, *op. cit.*, pl. 268 a.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

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Property from a European Private Collection

2

Valdivia Stone Figure

Circa 2300 - 2000 BC

Estimate:6,000 - 8,000 EUR

☐ No Reserves ☒ VAT reduced rate

DESCRIPTION

Property from a European Private Collection

Valdivia Stone Figure
Circa 2300 - 2000 BC

Height: 9 in (23 cm)

PROVENANCE

Alvaro Guillot-Muñoz (1897-1971), Montevideo, acquired prior to 1950

Gerald Berjonneau, Paris, by descent from the above European Private Collection, acquired from the above on November 16, 1998

Thence by descent

CATALOGUE NOTE

Ancient stone steles from Ecuador are probably idols that were used in ritual contexts. While each stele is unique, there are some common characteristics: they are fairly uniform in their block-like, cubist form and recessed grooves, all in grey-green sandstone. The anthropomorphic idols are often considered as shamans with the sunken faces referential of mystical and nocturnal owls.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

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Property from a European Private Collection

3

Sicán Gold Beaker with Warrior

Circa AD 900 - 1100

Estimate: 15,000 - 25,000 EUR

☐ No Reserves ☒ VAT reduced rate

DESCRIPTION

Property from a European Private Collection

Sicán Gold Beaker with Warrior
Circa AD 900 - 1100

Height: 6 1/4 in (15.9 cm)

PROVENANCE

Paul Cheesman, Florida
John C. Wise, New York, acquired from the above in October or November, 1960
Paul Tishman, acquired from the above prior to 1967
European Private Collection, from the above in January 30, 1980
Thence by descent

EXHIBITION

Denver, The Denver Art Museum, 1998 - 2017, (TL 18299)

CATALOGUE NOTE

In the ancient Andes, such gold drinking vessels were created for the ruling elite to be used in ceremonies and later included among their funerary goods. They would have probably contained *chicha*, the ritual liquid of fermented corn that was at the center of ceremonial libations.

The drinking cup, *kero*, has been hammered up from a single sheet of gold with a repousse depiction on each side with a ruler holding in each hand a ceremonial staff topped by paired profile anthropomorphic heads and a shield, coiffed with a tall plumed headdress and distinguished by large, comma-shaped eyes, characteristic of the central god, known as the Sicán Deity, while vertical rows of stylized birds divide the cup's pictorial surface, and another line of these birds embellishes the bottom register.

See Julie Jones, ed., *The Art of Pre-Columbian Gold*, New York, 1985, cat. no. 74, for the identical iconography in the Jan Mitchell Collection, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Acc. no. 1991.419.63.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



Property from a European Private Collection

4

Sicán Gold Mask

Circa AD 900 - 1100

Estimate:8,000 - 12,000 EUR

☐ No Reserves ☒ VAT reduced rate

DESCRIPTION

Property from a European Private Collection

Sicán Gold Mask
Circa AD 900 - 1100

Height: 9 1/2 in (24.1 cm)

PROVENANCE

Stendahl Galleries, Los Angeles
European Private Collection, acquired from the above on July 19, 1968
Thence by descent

CATALOGUE NOTE

The single gold sheet is evenly hammered and repoussé with the iconic Sicán face of comma-shaped eyes and straight mouth delineated by thin raised lines. The nose is modeled in relief showing the flared nostrils of inhalation.

While sheet metal ornaments are seemingly a basic form, Sicán metallurgists excelled at the technical mastery of annealing, hammering to an even thickness, and final repoussé designs. Furthermore, “In addition to ornamental and utilitarian usages, metals became the prestigious media of the political, social and religious expression” (Shimada, Griffin and Gordus, “The Technology, Iconography and Social Significance of Metals, A Multi-Dimensional Analysis of Middle Sican Objects,” in Colin McEwan, ed., *Pre Columbian Gold, Technology, Style and Iconography*, London, 2000, p. 30).

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



Property from a European Private Collection

5

Calima Gold Diadem

Yotoco Period, circa AD 100 - 700

Estimate: 40,000 - 60,000 EUR

† VAT reduced rate

DESCRIPTION

Property from a European Private Collection

Calima Gold Diadem
Yotoco Period, circa AD 100 - 700

Height: 11 in (28 cm); width: 10 5⁄8 in (27 cm)

PROVENANCE

André Emmerich, New York (inv. no. B-14)
European Private Collection, acquired from the above on
December 9, 1967
Thence by descent

CATALOGUE NOTE

The elaborate headdress is embossed with an enigmatic human face with closed eyes, adorned with large, convex disks as earrings and an H-shaped nose ornament, worked with a smaller face on the surface, and covering most of the face, the side flanges decorated with beadwork and dangling elements, with bipartite rays emanating from the top and an arrow-shaped ray extruding from below.

This type of facial representation is found on the well-known kidney-shaped pectorals (see The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Acc. no. 1979.206.507) with little to no variation in the iconography.

Such Calima regalia was first hammered in a sheet and then details were sculpted, probably over a mold, such as the high relief face and further embellished with beadwork along with an array of dangles attached with gold wires.

Such a headdress ornament, also dubbed a frontal, was probably attached to the front of a textile headdress. Fully outfitted with other equally resplendent gold objects, Calima high-ranking elite and rulers would have shone brightly, thereby associating themselves with the sun and concomitantly with its cosmic energy.

For elaborate diadems see The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Acc. no. 66.196.26; see also Timothy Stroud, ed., *The Art of Gold: The Legacy of Pre-Hispanic Colombia*, Milan, p. 91.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

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Property from a European Private Collection

6

Coclé Gold Pectoral

Circa AD 700 - 1200

Estimate: 10,000 - 15,000 EUR

☐ No Reserves ☒ VAT reduced rate

DESCRIPTION

Property from a European Private Collection

Coclé Gold Pectoral
Circa AD 700 - 1200

Diameter: 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ in (16.9 cm)

PROVENANCE

Gimpel & Hanover Gallery, Zurich, in collaboration with André Emmerich (inv. no. CF 12)

European Private Collection, acquired from the above on
November 14, 1980

Thence by descent

CATALOGUE NOTE

Finely hammered and of dense form, featuring a repousse composite zoomorph incorporating the traits of a splayed, leaping frog with the head representing a ferocious crocodilian with bared fangs and curled talons; with four pierced holes.

Such plaques were prized objects in the Isthmus gold working regions of Coclé, Diquis and Veraguas, and were worn as breastplates or more probably attached to garments.

For highly similar iconography see Joanne Pillsbury, ed., *Golden Kingdoms, Luxury Arts in the Ancient Americas*, New York, 2017, p. 193, cat. no. 99.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



Property from a European Private Collection

7

Ceremonial Maya Stone Metate, North Coastal Honduras

Postclassic, circa AD 800 - 1100

Estimate: 7,000 - 10,000 EUR

☐ No Reserves ☒ VAT reduced rate

DESCRIPTION

Property from a European Private Collection

Ceremonial Maya Stone Metate, North Coastal Honduras
Postclassic, circa AD 800 - 1100

Length: 36 in (92 cm)

PROVENANCE

André Emmerich, New York (inv. no. M256)
European Private Collection, acquired from the above on
March 24, 1973
Thence by descent

CATALOGUE NOTE

Such Maya metate are rare and divergent from the Central American examples which have survived in abundance. Honduran metates are characterized by the up-curving platforms, shorter legs, and dramatic deeply carved ferocious heads as a counterbalance to the weighty volcanic stone.

Here, the mythical creature's fangs are bared and a long tongue curls upward; together with a large *mano*.

For similar metates, see The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Acc. No. 1979.206.887; Elisabeth Kennedy Easby, *Ancient Art of Latin America from the Collection of Jay C. Leff, A Special Exhibition*, Brooklyn Museum, November, 1966, no. 485.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



Property from a European Private Collection

8

Colima Standing Figure with Vessel

Comala style, Protoclassic, circa 100 BC - AD 250

Estimate: 5,000 - 8,000 EUR

☐ No Reserves ☒ VAT reduced rate

DESCRIPTION

Property from a European Private Collection

Colima Standing Figure with Vessel
Comala style, Protoclassic, circa 100 BC - AD 250

Height: 14 ³/₄ in (37.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

David Stuart, Los Angeles
European Private Collection, acquired from the above on July
25, 1970
Thence by descent

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doceanie-et-des-ameriques/personnage-colima](https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2024/arts-dafrigue-doceanie-et-des-ameriques/personnage-colima)



CATALOGUE NOTE

The cargador figure leans forward with both hands holding the tumpline around his head, supporting the large spouted jar on his back. His pensive expression of deeply slit wide eyes and set mouth is typical of the burden carrier figures. The genre of figures with vessels carried by the tumpline, is a testament to the importance of trading and transporting the wide variety but preciously limited, natural resources available within the diverse ecosystems of ancient West Mexico.

For the figure type, see Richard F. Townsend, ed., *Ancient West Mexico, Art and Archaeology of the Unknown Past*, Chicago, 1998, p. 207, fig. 6.

Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



Property from a European Private Collection

9

Colima Vessel of a Seated Cargador, Comala style

Protoclassic, circa 100 BC – AD 250

Estimate: 2,000 - 4,000 EUR

☐ No Reserves

DESCRIPTION

Property from a European Private Collection

Colima Vessel of a Seated Cargador
Protoclassic, circa 100 BC - AD 250

Height: 7 ½ in (19 cm)

PROVENANCE

Proctor Stafford, Los Angeles
David Stuart, Los Angeles
European Private Collection, acquired from the above on July 26, 1970
Thence by descent

CATALOGUE NOTE

The burden carrier with limbs akimbo and head turned slightly to the left with relaxed expression while supporting nine artistically-stacked *ollas* (wide-mouthed jars).

For a highly similar example, see Michael Kan, Clement Meighan and H.B. Nicholson, *Sculpture of Ancient West Mexico, Nayarit, Jalisco, Colima, The Proctor Stafford Collection*, Los Angeles, 1970, front cover.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

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Property from a European Private Collection

10

Olmecoid / Proto-Maya Jade Figure

Late Preclassic, circa 300 - 100 BC

Estimate: 6,000 - 8,000 EUR

☐ No Reserves ☒ VAT reduced rate

DESCRIPTION

Property from a European Private Collection

Olmecoid/Proto-Maya Jade Figure
Late Preclassic, circa 300 - 100 BC

Height: 4 in (10.2 cm)

PROVENANCE

Everett Rassiga, New York
European Private Collection, acquired from the above on
January 2, 1973
Thence by descent

CATALOGUE NOTE

Showing a strong Olmec influence and transformational references, this compact figure bears a forceful presence. Carved with deep and deliberate recessed eyes under scrolled brows and an upcurled lip forming the tightly pulled mouth. A small topknot projection on the head references a maize sprout. Both hands with carefully delineated fingers rest on the rounded chest and a finely incised knotted belt wraps the hips with flaps extending down the legs. The addition of the bright red cinnabar remains in the recessed areas, further imbuing the figure with ritual significance.

For Olmec figures, see Michael D. Coe, et. al., *The Olmec World, Ritual and Rulership*, Princeton, 1996, p. 161, cat. no. 36, and p. 265, cat. no. 179; see also Elizabeth Kennedy Easby and John F. Scott, *Before Cortes: Sculpture of Middle America*, New York, 1970, cat. no. 73.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



Property from a European Private Collection

11

Maya Stone Hacha of a Serpent

Late Classic, circa AD 550 - 950

Estimate: 20,000 - 30,000 EUR

† VAT reduced rate

DESCRIPTION

Property from a European Private Collection

Maya Stone Hacha of a Serpent
Late Classic, circa AD 550 - 950

Height: 11 ¼ in (28.6 cm)

PROVENANCE

Alphonse Jax, New York
European Private Collection, acquired from the above on
February 5, 1978
Thence by descent

EXHIBITION

Denver, The Denver Art Museum, 1998 - 2017, (TL 18287.4)

CATALOGUE NOTE

One of three fine hachas in the collection (see lots 12 and 14) representing one of the important ceremonial objects of the ballgame. The hachas from the Southern highlands of the Maya region are typically slender in width and carved without a deep notch at the back.

The head of the animal here has jawlines terminating in symmetrical scrolls, and carved with a deep oval eye and gaping jaw; the body is tightly coiled up and over the head ending the powerful rattle of the snake. The lower edge of the sinuous body is carved with a segmented band.

The snake held continuous significance in Mesoamerican iconography, aptly revered for its ability to traverse above and below the ground, and the annual shedding of its skin as a form of rebirth. The snake is the fifth in the sequence of the twenty day or calendar signs for both the Aztecs and the Maya. The 'plumed serpent' deity *Quetzalcoatl* of the Aztecs, was portrayed as the vision serpent for the Maya.

Cf. Edwin M. Shook and Elayne Marquis, *Secrets in Stone: Yokes, Hachas and Palmas from Southern Mesoamerica*, Philadelphia, 1996, p. 171, S1.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



Property from a European Private Collection

12

Maya Stone Hacha of a Bat

Late Classic, circa AD 550 - 950

Estimate:25,000 - 35,000 EUR

⚡ VAT reduced rate

DESCRIPTION

Property from a European Private Collection

Maya Stone Hacha of a Bat
Late Classic, circa AD 550 - 950

Height: 10 5⁄8 in (27 cm)

PROVENANCE

Harry Franklin, Beverly Hills
Private European Collection, acquired from the above on
December 31, 1966
Thence by descent

CATALOGUE NOTE

Of tall elegant form with a sweeping coiled tapering tail surmounting the bat head. The facial design continues the curvilinear design with the double scroll above the recessed eye and strong jawline. While typical bat hachas feature the pointed ear and tragus, the small flattened nose here is most typical of the bat. Combining the dominant attributes of key animals such as the bat and serpent, is a characteristic of hachas from the southern Maya region. The bat is recognized for its powerful nocturnal hunting abilities and is a key player in the mythology of the Underworld.

For a similar hacha see, Edwin M. Shook and Elayne Marquis, *Secrets in Stone: Yokes, Hachas and Palmas from Southern Mesoamerica*, Philadelphia, 1996, p. 78, B2, and p. 82, B17.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



Property from a European Private Collection

13

Veracruz Stone Yoke

Late Classic, circa AD 550 - 950

Estimate: 75,000 - 125,000 EUR

† VAT reduced rate

DESCRIPTION

Property from a European Private Collection

Veracruz Stone Yoke

Late Classic, circa AD 550 - 950

Length: 16 ¾ in (42.6 cm)

PROVENANCE

Jay C. Leff, Uniontown, Pennsylvania

Sotheby's, New York, *Important Pre-Columbian Art*, May 12 and 13, 1983, lot 106, consigned by the above

European Private Collection, acquired at the above auction

Thence by descent

EXHIBITION

Pittsburgh, The Carnegie Institute, *Exotic Art from Ancient and Primitive Civilizations: Collection of Jay C. Leff*, October 15, 1959 – January 3, 1960

New York, The Brooklyn Museum of Art, *Ancient Art of Latin America: From the Collection of Jay C. Leff*, November 22, 1966 – March 5, 1967

Allentown, The Allentown Art Museum, *Pre-Columbian Art of Mesoamerica: From the Collection of Jay C. Leff*, February 13 – April 2, 1972

Huntington, Huntington Galleries, *Ancient Art of Middle America: Selections from the Jay C. Leff Collection*, February 17 – June 9, 1974

Dallas, The Dallas Museum of Art, 1991 - 2017, on loan

LITERATURE

Gordon B. Washburn, *Exotic Art from Ancient and Primitive Civilizations: Collection of Jay C. Leff*, Pittsburgh, 1959, p. 76, no. 493

Elizabeth K. Easby, *Ancient Art of Latin America: From the Collection of Jay C. Leff*, New York, 1966, no. 311

Michael Kan, *Pre-Columbian Art of Mesoamerica: From the Collection of Jay C. Leff*, Allentown, 1972, no. 63, illus.

Katheryn M. Linduff, *Ancient Art of Middle America: Selections from the Jay C. Leff Collection*, Huntington, 1974, p. 40, no. 61, illus.

CATALOGUE NOTE

The massive sculpture is one of the more abstract versions of these important ceremonial trophies. It combines the important and dominant elements of honored avatars of serpent and saurian. The front is carved with large slightly tapered teeth in a tight sequence surmounted by elongated quadripartite forms, each side shows the stylized tightly bent legs and wide foot. Scrolls and a segmented band are fluidly arranged on the top side of the yoke. Each end is carved with a delicate geometric form. Remains of red pigment are visible on the interior and incised areas of the top; it is carved in a deep gray-green stone with a lustrous burnish.

The ballgame and use of yokes

The ballgame is one of the most defining features of ancient Mesoamerica with the carved yokes, hachas, and palma sculptures providing the link to this ceremonial game. Over 1500 ballcourts are known to exist in various parts of Mexico and Guatemala, with the most famous ballcourts and relief panels at El Tajin. The ballgame had religious and cosmic significance as relayed in the sacred Maya epic of the Popul Vuh. The ballcourt is considered the entrance to the Underworld where the Hero Twins are summoned to play the Lords of the Underworld. The defeat and rebirth of the Twins is reimagined as the daily cycle of the sun and moon. The ballgame itself was a metaphor for constant interplay of life and death; the cosmic cycle of day and night.

It is widely accepted that stone yokes were impossible to wear during a game and thus were the ceremonial counterpart of the perishable wood or leather protective belts. Yokes are frequently carved as toads who deftly transverse levels of the earth; thus the intended wearer of a yoke was placed at the nexus of the two worlds. The stone yoke is a symbol of authority and a vehicle empowering the wearer in the 'symbolic significance of transformation'.¹ A yoke entitled one to perform rites and ceremonies. Yokes were also buried in tombs with the other accouterments of hachas and

palmas, signifying their importance for success and stature in the afterlife.

¹ Edwin M. Shook, Elayne Marquis, *Secrets in Stone, Yokes, Hachas and Palmas from Southern Mesoamerica*, Philadelphia, 1996, p. 6

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



Property from a European Private Collection

14

Veracruz Stone Hacha of an Avian

Late Classic, circa AD 550 - 950

Estimate:10,000 - 15,000 EUR

☐ No Reserves ☒ VAT reduced rate

DESCRIPTION

Property from a European Private Collection

Veracruz Stone Hacha of an Avian
Late Classic, circa AD 550 - 950

Height: 16 in (40.6 cm)

PROVENANCE

Dr. Aaron Nisenson, Los Angeles
Stendahl Galleries, Los Angeles
European Private Collection, acquired from the above on
December 18, 1977
Thence by descent

EXHIBITION

Los Angeles, The Natural History Museum of Los Angeles
County, *Ancient Art of Veracruz*, February 23 - June 13, 1971
Denver, The Denver Art Museum, 1998 - 2017, (TL 18287.7)

LITERATURE

Olga Hammer, ed., *Ancient Art of Veracruz*, Los Angeles, 1971,
p. 90, fig. 138

CATALOGUE NOTE

The tall hacha is carved with distinct elements of a tropical bird, perhaps a parrot, with large eyes ringed by tightly spaced feathers, a tall curled plume above and a strong downturned openwork beak. The crest is further trimmed by segmented feathers. Avians of the tropical rain forest and birds of prey were recognized and honored throughout ancient Mesoamerica, depicted in all forms of art including stone sculpture, polychrome pottery, stela, and in hieroglyphic texts. Tropical birds in particular were of importance for their brilliant plumage used in ritual costume, as trading currency, and for their flight and vocal qualities invoking a supernatural ability.

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Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



Property from a European Private Collection

15

Maya Eccentric Flint of God K

Late Classic, circa AD 550-950

Estimate:50,000 - 70,000 EUR

⚡ VAT reduced rate

DESCRIPTION

Property from a European Private Collection

Maya Eccentric Flint of God K
Late Classic, circa AD 550-950

Height: 14 in (35.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

André Emmerich, New York (inv. no. M74)
European Private Collection, acquired on March 28, 1967
Thence by descent

EXHIBITION

New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Before Cortés: Sculpture of Middle America - A Centennial Exhibition at The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, September 30, 1970 - January 3, 1971
New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2012 - 2023 (inv. no. L.2012.2.1), on loan

LITERATURE

Elizabeth Kennedy Easby and John F. Scott, *Before Cortes: Sculpture of Middle America - A Centennial Exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York, 1970, no. 200

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



Property from a European Private Collection

16

Teotihuacan Stone Figure

Classic, circa AD 450 - 650

Estimate: 6,000 - 8,000 EUR

☐ No Reserves ☒ VAT reduced rate

DESCRIPTION

Property from a European Private Collection

Teotihuacan Stone Figure
Classic, circa AD 450 - 650

Height: 10 ¼ in (26 cm)

SALEROOM NOTICE

Veuillez noter que la provenance a été modifiée, les lignes "Everett Rassiga, New York" et "Collection privée européenne, acquis au précédent le 10 décembre 1968" ont été supprimées. Please note that the provenance has been modified, the lines "Everett Rassiga, New York" and "European private collection, acquired on December 10, 1968" have been deleted.

PROVENANCE

European Private Collection, acquired by the end of the 1980's
Thence by descent

CATALOGUE NOTE

The formal geometric posture is a trademark of such Teotihuacan sculpture, forming the canon of the idealized and universal figure standing erectly with a mask-like face and solely adorned the T-shaped headdress earrings and belt.

For examples of the type, see Matthew H. Robb, ed., *Teotihuacan, City of Water, City of Fire*, San Francisco, 2017, p. 267, cat. nos. 65 - 66.

CONDITION REPORT

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



Property from a European Private Collection

17

Maya Polychrome Ritual Container of a Diving God

Mayapan, Late Postclassic, circa AD 1200 - 1500

Estimate: 30,000 - 50,000 EUR

† VAT reduced rate

DESCRIPTION

Property from a European Private Collection

Maya Polychrome Ritual Container of a Diving God
Mayapan, Late Postclassic, circa AD 1200 - 1500

Height: 5 ½ in (14 cm)

PROVENANCE

José Palomeque, Mérida
Alphonse Jax, New York, acquired from the above in 1968
European Private Collection, acquired from the above on
February 9, 1981
Thence by descent
Sotheby's, New York, 15 May 2017, lot 72, consigned by the
above

EXHIBITION

Brussels, Royal Museums of Art and History, *Trésors du
Nouveau Monde*, September 15 - December 27, 1992
Geneva, Musée Rath, *Mexique, terre des dieux. Trésors de l'art
précolombien*, October 8, 1998 - January 24, 1999

LITERATURE

Emile and Lin Deletaille, eds., *Trésors du Nouveau Monde*,
Brussels, 1992, p. 248, fig. 212
Henri Stierlin and Irène de Charrière, *Mexique, terre des dieux.
Trésors de l'art précolombien*, Geneva, 1998, p. 228, no. 263
Eleanor Elbert, *The Protoclassic Maya Diving Maize God*,
(unpublished MA thesis) Princeton, 2012, fig. 7

CATALOGUE NOTE

*"The Maya diving maize god was part of a pan-Mesoamerican, cross-cultural understanding of maize agriculture as both literally and metaphorically responsible for continued survival through rebirth and fertility."*¹

This rare and delicate vessel is part of a set - and one of few left in private hands, with the others all in US institutions and museum collections.

The finely modeled inverted figure known as the diving god, *Yum Kaax*, honors the essential substances of life-giving maize, the most important crop in ancient Mesoamerica, and cacao, the sacred chocolate drink of the Maya elite and royalty. The diving god is holding the cacao pod gently between both hands. The figure's legs are bent back and upward in an acrobatic, contorted posture, forming the symbolic branching cacao tree itself.

The containers were made during the Postclassic era in a distinct coloring and painting style influenced by the Central Mexican codices. However the essential imagery on the cups was based on important early Maya images of maize and cacao. In *"The Postclassic Maya Diving Maize God"* (unpublished MA thesis, Princeton, 2012), Eleanor Elbert thoroughly discussed this cup (Vessel 5), among the set of seven vessels; she notes they refer "to the maize god as a costumed participant in dance, self-referentially linking the objects with what was probably an aspect of the very ceremony in which they were used" (*ibid.*, p. 49). The vessels "made manifest an avenue for communication with the god represented on them, and their exquisite craftsmanship was intended to please him so that he would bless them with rainfall and agricultural good fortune" (*ibid.*).

While the vessels are significant as sacred cached objects, they should be viewed within a larger framework of complex religious ideas expressed by the Maya artist; the vessels 'incorporated stylistic and iconographic components purposefully, seeking to establish the elite status of the objects through a highly-

educated process of manufacture and engagement with style and subject matter of iconographic images' (*ibid.*, p. 72).

For the other diving god vessels, see the two vessels in the Library of Congress, Washington D.C. in the Kislak Collection, accession no. 1991.179.00.0003 and accession no. 1991.179.00.0001; for the vessel in Miami Dade College, Museum of Art and Design MDC PC 2018.1.6; for the vessel in the Chrysler Museum formerly in the Pearlman Collection see object no. 86.430; and for the example in the Princeton University Art Museum see object no. y1982-15.

¹ Eleanor Elbert, *The Protoclassic Maya Diving Maize God*, (unpublished MA thesis) Princeton, 2012, p. 25, fig. 7

A Postclassic Diving God Vessel Dicey Taylor, Ph.D

This vessel is one of seven small vases said to have been found on the Caribbean coast of Quintana Roo, Mexico. All are unslipped redware cups with pedestal bases and 'diving god' figures modeled in relief, their legs directed upward. They were painted in post-fire pigments of black, red, blue, white and yellow. As in this example, the god's face appears in the open mouth of an avian messenger, whose upper beak is capped by two maize plants sprouting silken threads, painted in blue and black. The face has lines running through the eyes and the ear spools are painted blue. The diving figure in this example holds a cacao pod; in others, the gods hold small round cakes of maize tamales. The vases are all about five inches high and are so similar that they were probably made by the same artist. Three of the seven belong to the Jay Kislak Foundation Collection at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.; a fourth is in the Princeton University Art Museum in New Jersey; and a fifth resides at the Chrysler Museum in Norfolk, Virginia. This one is still privately held and the other vessel was sold in 2004.

The diving god image became popular in the Yucatan Peninsula during the early phases of the Postclassic period (AD 800–900), appearing as sculpted stucco figures on building façades at Coba, Sayil and Chichen Itza. The deity was also featured on façades at later centers such as Mayapan, Tulum and Santa Rita. He is the Maize God, or First Father, a central figure in the Maya creation story. Before the dawn of present time, according to the myth, First Father was called to the underworld, where the death gods decapitated him and placed his head in a cacao tree. Later, miraculously resuscitated by his sons, the Hero Twins, he danced out of the underworld, bringing maize and cacao - the staple crops of the Maya - to earth. Classic Maya art (AD 250–800) typically portrays the reborn Maize God emerging from a cracked turtle shell representing the surface of the earth. However, there are well-documented images of him as a diving god, his symbolic death, descending a cacao tree into the underworld at the end of the summer maize season. The murals of San Bartolo in Guatemala (circa 100 BC) show him as a diving figure, attesting to the antiquity of the creation story, which endured and was recorded by the Maya after the Spanish conquest in a book called the Popul Vuh. This diving god vessel thus evokes the death and resurrection of First Father and his gifts of maize and cacao to the ancient Maya.

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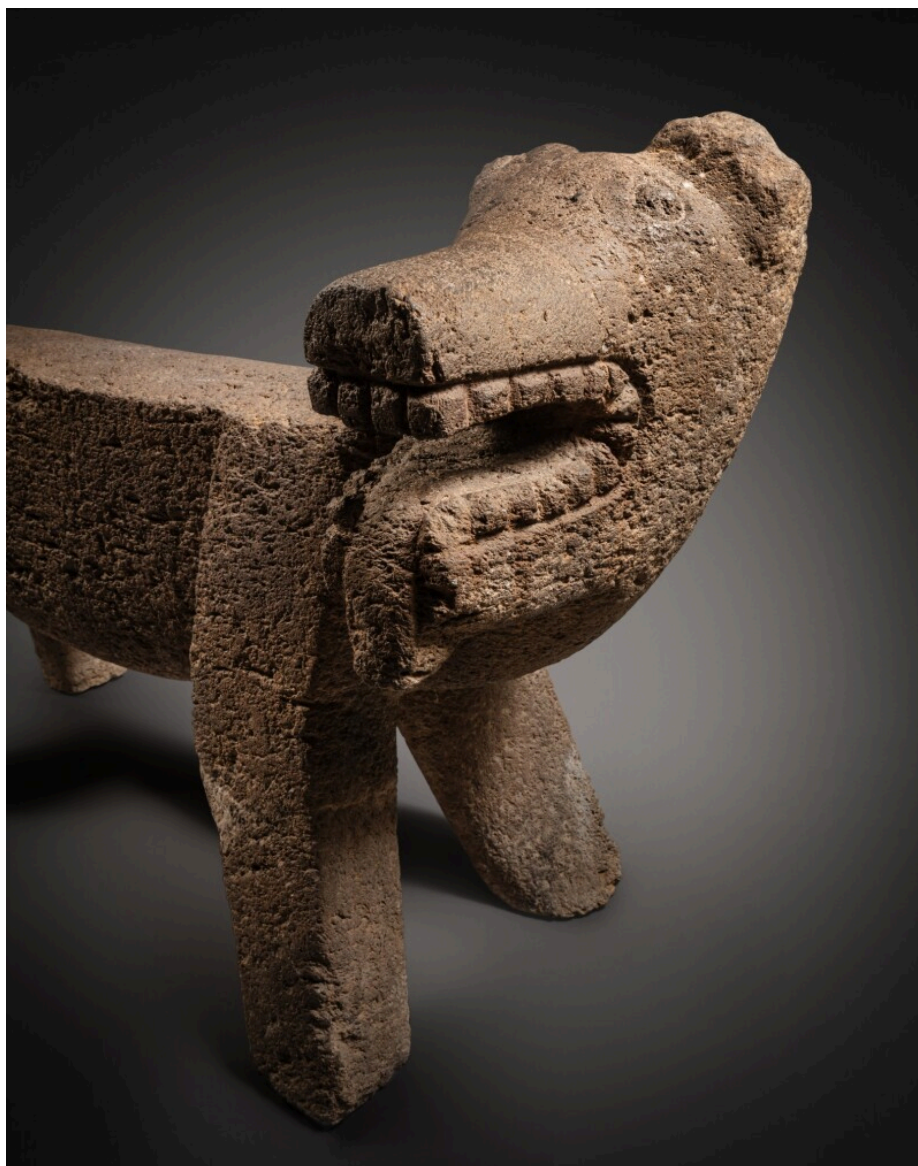
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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



Property from a European Private Collection

18

Michoacán Stone Coyote Throne

Postclassic, circa AD 900 - 1200

Estimate: 40,000 - 60,000 EUR

† VAT reduced rate

DESCRIPTION

Property from a European Private Collection

Michoacán Stone Coyote Throne
Postclassic, circa AD 900 - 1200

Length: 53 in (134.6 cm), height: 27 ½ in (69.8 cm)

PROVENANCE

Harry Franklin, Beverly Hills
European Private Collection, acquired from the above on
December 31, 1966
Thence by descent

EXHIBITION

Reportedly loaned to the The Natural History Museum of Los
Angeles County in 1966

CATALOGUE NOTE

The powerful yet whimsical canine carved in an unbroken single piece of basalt as abstract, planar elements with the head rotating ninety degrees to the right to present a frontal face, reminiscent of the Maya *Chacmools*, with mouth agape and tongue exposed.

Coyotes played a significant role in the mythology of the *Purepecha* people (called the *Tarascons* by the Spanish) and inhabiting the region of Michoacán. They were a symbol of astuteness, worldly wisdom, pragmatism, male beauty and youthfulness. For the contemporaneous Aztec, *Huēhuehcoyōtl* was an auspicious, shape-shifting deity sharing some of the characteristics of the trickster Coyote of the indigenous peoples of North America.

Such a flat-backed animal effigy seat would have served as a ritual seat for an elite personage or shaman-priest harkening back to the jaguar pelt covered thrones of the Maya.

For highly similar examples see Wolfgang Haberland, *American Indian Art: A Descriptive Catalogue*, Museum Rietberg Zurich, Atlantis Verlag, 1971, p. 130 - 131, acc. RMA 18; see also Fernando Gamboa, *Masterworks of Mexican Art, From Pre-Columbian Times to the Present*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, October 1963 - January 1964, p. 53, cat. no. 360, illus., p. 57.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



Property from a European Private Collection

19

Stone Figure in Animal Skin

Postclassic, circa AD 1350 - 1521

Estimate: 15,000 - 25,000 EUR

☐ No Reserves ☒ VAT reduced rate

DESCRIPTION

Property from a European Private Collection

Stone Figure in Animal Skin
Postclassic, circa AD 1350 - 1521

Height: 15 in (38.1 cm)

PROVENANCE

Ben Heller, New York, acquired prior to 1973
Private European Collection, acquired from the above
Thence by descent

EXHIBITION

The Denver Art Museum, 1998 - 2017, (TL 18281)

LITERATURE

Laurie Gwen Shapiro, "Design Hunting: The Frick of the Upper West Side" in *New York Magazine*, Fall 2017 - Winter 2018

CATALOGUE NOTE

The seated figure is completely enveloped in the skin of a feline, indicating his possible warrior status. The highest ranking Aztec warriors were associated with the eagle or jaguar cults and wore helmets and skins of these avatars, the *tlahuiztli* was the costume denoting the chosen animal, worn for ceremony and possibly combat.

The feline head has large rounded bulging eyes and tightly coiled nostrils, the strong tongue extends down onto the folded arms of the figure, who peers out from within this massive animal head helmet. The figure rests in the classic posture of seated Aztec figures with the knees raised tightly to the body; here the animal's paws and clawed feet are carved on the limbs. On the figure's back is a four-pointed star emblem with two prongs on the top, such dorsal insignias are worn by high-ranking warriors.

For figures wearing animal and bird skins, see Eduardo Matos Moctezuma and Felipe Solís Olguín, *Aztecs*, London, 2002, p. 451, cat. no. 206, and p. 456, cat. no. 228.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



Property from a European Family Collection

20

Maya Lidded Tripod Vessel

Early Classic, circa AD 250 - 450

Estimate: 5,000 - 8,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

Property from a European Private Collection

Maya Lidded Tripod Vessel
Early Classic, circa AD 250 - 450

Height: 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ in (19.7 cm)

PROVENANCE

Louis (1930-2013) and Dena Marienthal, Los Angeles
Sotheby's, New York, *African, Oceanic and Pre-Columbian Art*,
November 20, 2000, lot 324
European Private Collection, acquired at the above auction
Thence by descent

CATALOGUE NOTE

The vessel is distinguished by the unusual iconography with the lid and basal flange treated with a punctate pattern, supported on openwork slab feet in the style associated with Teotihuacan, the walls and molded heads encircling the body of the vessel, the top and handle of the lid, possibly depicting monkeys, with slit eyes and gaping mouths.

There is an association of monkeys with cacao which was considered a gift of the gods, with this precious crop sequestered in sacred groves. The coveted cacao pods appear on Maya painted vessels and molded as a volumetric monkey surrounded by cacao pods atop a censer lid in the Tonina site museum.

See Kerr *mayavase.com* K7454 for a tripod vessel with a monkey-decorated lid.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



Property from a European Family Collection

21

Ceremonial Maya Marble Feasting Vessel, Ulúa Valley

Circa AD 800 - 1100

Estimate: 10,000 - 15,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

Property from a European Private Collection

Ceremonial Maya Marble Feasting Vessel, Ulúa Valley
Circa AD 800 - 1100

Height: 9 in (22.9 cm)

PROVENANCE

Malcolm Delacorte, Cornwall, New York, acquired in 1957
Jaeger Collection, Germany, acquired in 1980
Sotheby's, New York, *Pre-Columbian Art*, November 20, 1995, lot 159
European Private Collection, acquired at the above auction
Thence by descent

CATALOGUE NOTE

The tall cylindrical vessel carved on each side with a stylized zoomorphic head with lunate eyes, ovoid mouth showing, with opposed volutes on the forehead, surrounded overall with bands of scrolls, each massive handle depicts a crouching feline.

White limestone marble vessels, used to drink chocolate or other ritual beverages, became prized possessions after about the seventh century. Vases of this style originated from sites near Travesía in the Ulúa Valley, in the Gulf of Honduras, and were gifted and traded as luxury throughout the Mexican corridor from Guanacaste to the central Mayan lowlands.

For a similar example, see Denver Art Museum, 1979.329.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



La Collection Deletaille

22

Veracruz Standing Male Figure

Late Classic, circa AD 550 - 950

Estimate: 8,000 - 12,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

La Collection Deletaille

Veracruz Standing Male Figure
Late Classic, circa AD 550 - 950

Height: 19 1/2 in (49.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

Emile Deletaille, Brussels, acquired by October, 1966
Thence by descent

EXHIBITION

Brussels, Société Générale de Banque, *Art de Mésoamérique - Meso-Amerikaanse kunst*, November 17, 1976 - January 8, 1977

LITERATURE

Société Générale de Banque, *Art de Mésoamérique - Meso-Amerikaanse kunst*, Brussels, 1976, fig. 116

CATALOGUE NOTE

The *sonriente* figure is one of the signature genres of Gulf Coast ceramic sculptures. So named for their lively grinning mouth and animated posture with upraised arms holding a rattle, this figure is accented by prominent cheekbones and dimpled cheeks. His forward stance is supported on the gently bent knees. Wearing a pendant bead necklace and crescent earrings, he is further adorned with the constricting chest band of geometric motifs, and a stiff headband supporting a plaque of a stylized avian in profile.

A *sonriente* may be associated with the later Aztec god *Xochipilli*, the deity of dance, music and joy.

CONDITION REPORT

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



La Collection Deletaille

23

Colima Vessel

Protoclassic, circa 100 BC - AD 250

Estimate: 4,000 - 6,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

La Collection Deletaille

Colima Vessel

Protoclassic, circa 100 BC - AD 250

Height: 7 1/4 in (18.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

Emile Deletaille, Brussels, acquired in 1966

Roger Stallaert, Brussels, acquired from the above in 1968

Lin and Emile Deletaille, Brussels, acquired from the estate of the above in 2019

Thence by descent

EXHIBITION

Brussels, Société Générale de Banque, *Art de Mésoamérique - Meso-Amerikaanse kunst*, November 17, 1976 - January 8, 1977

LITERATURE

Société Générale de Banque, *Art de Mésoamérique - Meso-Amerikaanse kunst*, Brussels, 1976, fig. 40

CATALOGUE NOTE

The tradition of Colima vessels modeled with a horned effigy head or larger scale vessels with a series of horned effigy heads is a well-documented subcategory of Colima sculpture. See Cleveland Museum of Art, Acc. No. 1990.262.

The bottle has an unusual decorative scheme with sixteen diminutive anthropomorphic heads sporting horned headdresses.

The interpretation of the headdress horn as that of a shaman was brought to the fore by Peter Furst in the 1960s. Mark Graham (*The Iconography of Rulership in Ancient West Mexico*, 1998, pp. 191 - 203) has proposed that the 'horned' projection was a sliver of a conch shell, which was a symbol of authority and rulership.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

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La Collection Deletaille

24

Teotihuacan Stone Mask

Classic, circa AD 450 - 650

Estimate:7,000 - 9,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

La Collection Deletaille

Teotihuacan Stone Mask
Classic, circa AD 450 - 650

Height: 5 1/8 in (13 cm)

PROVENANCE

Emile Deletaille, Brussels, acquired in 1969

Roger Stallaert, Brussels, acquired from the above July 10, 1969

Lin and Emile Deletaille, Brussels, acquired from the above in 2019

Thence by descent

EXHIBITION

Brussels, Société Générale de Banque, *Art de Mésoamérique - Meso-Amerikaanse Kunst*, November 17, 1976 - January 8, 1977

LITERATURE

Société Générale de Banque, *Art de Mésoamérique - Meso-Amerikaanse kunst*, Brussels, 1976, fig. 97

CATALOGUE NOTE

With serene expression, the deeply recessed eyes once inlaid under thin, arched brows, distinguished by the prominent nose with flaring nostrils, narrow ear flanges pierced for ear ornaments; and pierced at the sides and twice on the reverse, carved in deep, green-black serpentine.

The youthful idealized face is the hallmark of Teotihuacan stone masks. Here the large oval eyes fill the facial plane, while the gently expanded nostrils convey a sense of breath and life. It is believed that masks were centerpieces of figures made of perishable wood and fabric during annual ceremonies.

As Teotihuacan masks have distinctive typologies, some are taller than wide as the present mask with its fleshy treatment of the nose, a close example is found at the Musée du Quai Branly, Acc. No. 70.1999.12.1.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



La Collection Deletaille

25

Colima Seated Dog

Protoclassic, circa 100 BC - AD 250

Estimate: 45,000 - 65,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

La Collection Deletaille

Colima Seated Dog
Protoclassic, circa 100 BC - AD 250

Height: 16 in (41 cm)

PROVENANCE

Emile Deletaille, Brussels, acquired in the early 1960s
Andre Blieck, Brussels, acquired from the above in January 1968

Emile Deletaille, Brussels, acquired from the above in 2013
Thence by descent

CATALOGUE NOTE

The tall, grinning canine with his body, neck and head covered in a pattern of fine concentric wrinkles, with a distinctive treatment of the swept back, hollowed ears and highly burnished shoulder blades with a bicolor use of the slip in brown and red-brown.

Dogs held a powerful and pivotal place in ancient Mesoamerican cultures. In both the Maya and Aztec calendars, the favorable tenth day sign was 'Dog', *Itzcuintli*, in Nahuatl, the language of the Aztec. Dogs were kept as pets, hunting companions and guardians of the home. The Maya portrayed a dog holding a torch in their codices, possibly referring to their belief that the dog brought fire to mankind.

Colima dog sculptures are unique in their realism, vivacity and lustrous modeling. As an important part of the burial furniture of their tombs, the dog, in life and in death, remained Pre-Columbian man's most revered companion.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



La Collection Deletaille

26

Maya Eccentric Flint

Late Classic, circa AD 550 - 950

Estimate: 15,000 - 25,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

La Collection Deletaille

Maya Eccentric Flint
Late Classic, circa AD 550 - 950

Length: 11 in (27.4 cm)

PROVENANCE

Emile Deletaille, Brussels, acquired by July, 1970
Thence by descent

EXHIBITION

Brussels, Société Générale de Banque, *Art de Mésioamérique - Meso-Amerikaanse kunst*, November 17, 1976 - January 8, 1977
Brussels, Royal Museums of Art and History, *Trésors du Nouveau Monde*, September 15 - December 27, 1992

LITERATURE

Société Générale de Banque, *Art de Mésioamérique - Meso-Amerikaanse kunst*, Brussels, 1976, fig. 190
Institute of Maya Studies, Miami Museum of Science, Newsletter, October 12, 1977, p. 3, illus.
Gerald Berjonneau, Emile Deletaille and Jean-Louis Sonnery, *Rediscovered Masterpieces of Mesoamerica : Mexico - Guatemala - Honduras*, Boulogne, 1985, pp. 256 - 257, fig. 411
Emile and Lin Deletaille, eds., *Trésors du Nouveau Monde*, Brussels, 1992, p. 228, fig. 183

CATALOGUE NOTE

The extraordinarily thin section and even fluting of this eccentric flint is a testament to the delicate pressure-flaking technique. The art of flint-knapping with an antler on brittle stone was an ancient skill. Eccentrics were made throughout the Maya region as ceremonial objects placed as offerings in dedicatory caches along with stingray spines and shell and jade objects. Chert was an important raw material for functional tools as well as precious ritual objects. The well-balanced symmetry of this lance-shape with serrated edges and tapering prongs evokes a highly stylized animal.

For examples of eccentrics in chert and obsidian, see Peter Schmidt, Mercedes de la Garza and Enrique Nalda, eds., *Maya*, New York, 1998, pp. 606 - 607.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

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La Collection Deletaille

27

Maya Polychrome Vessel

Late Classic, circa AD 550 - 950

Estimate: 8,000 - 12,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

La Collection Deletaille

Maya Polychrome Vessel
Late Classic, circa AD 550 - 950

Height: 7 ⁷/₈ in (20 cm)

PROVENANCE

John Fulling, Pompano Beach
Emile Deletaille, Brussels, acquired from the above on June 4,
1976
Thence by descent

CATALOGUE NOTE

The cylindrical vase covered overall in a syncopated crosshatched pattern emulating basketry or most probably textile weave, separated by diagonal panels containing repeated pseudo-glyphs as well as encircling the rim and the base.

Mayan textiles were a form of Maya art and were very significant to their religion, culture, and social status. For the Classic Maya, clothing defined an individual's identity from their political position, to their trade, to their gender and as with many ancient cultures there were strict sumptuary rules of dressing which separated the common people from the elite classes.

Additionally fabric was used for tax payments, diplomatic gifts, as war tribute paid to overlords and also as feasting gifts among the high-ranking elite.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

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La Collection Deletaille

28

Maya Incised Double-Lidded Cache Vessel

Early Classic, circa AD 250 - 450

Estimate: 60,000 - 80,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

La Collection Deletaille

Maya Incised Double-Lidded Cache Vessel

Early Classic, circa AD 250 - 450

Diameter: 15 ¾ in (40 cm)

PROVENANCE

Fine Arts of Ancient Lands, New York, acquired in the early 1970s

Emile Deletaille, Brussels, acquired from the above in 1974

Thence by descent

EXHIBITION

Maastricht, TEFAF, March 8 - 16, 1997

LITERATURE

Gerald Berjonneau, Emile Deletaille, and Jean-Louis Sonnery, *Rediscovered Masterpieces of Mesoamerica*, Boulogne, 1985, p. 231, fig. 355

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



La Collection Deletaille

29

Maya Lidded Tripod Vessel

Early Classic, circa AD 250 - 450

Estimate: 20,000 - 30,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

La Collection Deletaille

Maya Lidded Tripod Vessel
Early Classic, circa AD 250 - 450

Height: 9 ³/₄ in (24.7 cm)

PROVENANCE

Stendahl Galleries, Los Angeles
Emile Deletaille, Brussels, acquired from the above on
February 23, 1976
Thence by descent

EXHIBITION

Brussels, Société Générale de Banque, *Art de Mésoamérique - Meso-Amerikaanse kunst*, November 17, 1976 - January 8, 1977

LITERATURE

Société Générale de Banque, *Art de Mésoamérique - Meso-Amerikaanse kunst*, Brussels, 1976, fig. 195

CATALOGUE NOTE

Maya vessels were made to honor and commemorate once-living rulers and to venerate their gods and ancestors; these ceramics with complex and narrative imagery were laden with power and symbolism.

Of graceful and fine proportion, the thin-walled vessel is supported on pierced slab feet of *Teotihuacan* style, and carved in sweeping bands along the body and scutate lid with highly stylized saurian surrounded by water/cloud scrolls, with remains of thick lime green stucco applied post firing.

Covering richly decorated vessels with stucco can be likened to the ancient Maya practice of covering white stucco on foundations or even superstructures to then bury them under new constructions (e. g. Rosalila at Copan). The usage of concealing stucco might have allowed the vessels to take on different meanings or usage laden with new symbolism.

See for the general type, C. Philips, ed., *Le Cinquième Soleil, Arts du Mexique*, 2012, p. 166, cat. no. 127

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Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



La Collection Deletaille

30

Ulúa Marble Vessel, Ulúa Valley

Postclassic, circa AD 800 - 1100

Estimate: 5,000 - 7,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

La Collection Deletaille

Ulúa Marble Vessel, Ulúa Valley
Postclassic, circa AD 800 - 1100

Height: 5 ⁷/₈ in

PROVENANCE

Emile Deletaille, Brussels, acquired by January, 1970
Thence by descent

CATALOGUE NOTE

These stone drinking vessels are characterized by their alluring fluid low relief carvings in white, creamy yet often translucent marble. They were laboriously carved with overall patterns of scrolls featuring zoomorphic handles, as in these stylized crocodilians with bared teeth.

Vases of this style originated from sites near Travesia in the Ulúa Valley in the Gulf of Honduras, and were gifted and traded as luxury goods throughout the Mexican corridor from Guanacaste in Costa Rica to the central Mayan lowlands.

Cf. for the general type, see Pal Kelemen, *Medieval American Art*, New York, 1944, pls. 94 - 95.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



La Collection Deletaille

31

Diquís Stone Figure

Period VI, circa AD 1000 - 1500

Estimate: 5,000 - 8,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

La Collection Deletaille

Diquís Stone Figure

Period VI, circa AD 1000 - 1500

Height: 19 1/2 in (49.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

Paul A. Clifford

California Private Collection, Los Angeles

Sotheby's, New York, *Pre-Columbian Art*, May 14, 1991, lot 71, consigned by the above

Lin and Emile Deletaille, Brussels, acquired at the above auction

Thence by descent

EXHIBITION

Atlanta, The High Museum of Art, *Pre-Columbian Art from the Collection of Paul A. Clifford and William C. Thibadeau*, February 13 - April 4, 1971

Los Angeles, The Natural History Museums of Los Angeles County, 1972 - 1989

LITERATURE

The High Museum of Art, *Pre-Columbian Art from the Collection of Paul A. Clifford and William C. Thibadeau*, Atlanta, 1971, p. 14, fig. 12

CATALOGUE NOTE

This peg-based figure contrasts the restraint of the rigid geometry of the body with the ferocity of the rounded head uplifted in a howling growl, showing the broad open jaw and teeth. The strong arms are folded on the chest in a protective gesture. The figure may represent a warrior with feline attributes.

Peg-base sculptures were influenced by stonework from the Colombian tradition of San Agustín. In the Diquís region, such anthropomorphic figures were perhaps placed in association with the perfectly formed stone spheres of ceremonial areas.

For discussion, see Michael J. Snarskis, Julie Jones and Michael Kan, eds., *Between Continents / Between Seas: Pre-Columbian Art of Costa Rica*, New York, 1981, pp. 220 - 221.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



La Collection Deletaille

32

Costa Rican Jade Mace Head, Nicoya-Guanacaste

Circa AD 1 - 500

Estimate: 10,000 - 15,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

La Collection Deletaille

Costa Rican Jade Mace Head, Nicoya-Guanacaste
Circa AD 1 - 500

Length: 4 ³/₄ in (12 cm), height: 4 in (10 cm)

PROVENANCE

Alfonso Jimenez, Costa Rica
Lin and Emile Deletaille, Brussels, acquired from the above in
1982
Thence by descent

EXHIBITION

Marcq-en-Baroeul, Fondation Septentrion, *Civilisations
Précolombiennes du Costa Rica et du Panama*, February 24 -
May 15, 1989
Brussels, Royal Museums of Art and History, *Trésors du
Nouveau Monde*, September 15 - December 27, 1992

LITERATURE

Sergio Purin, *Civilisations Précolombiennes du Costa Rica et du
Panama*, Marcq-en-Baroeul, 1989, p. 86, fig. 50
Emile and Lin Deletaille, eds., *Trésors du Nouveau Monde*,
Brussels, 1992, p. 258, fig. 226

CATALOGUE NOTE

The creative association of anthropomorphic, zoomorphic and supernatural traits is a distinctive feature of ancient Central American artistic production.

The ceremonial finial features a human trophy head with tubular side projections sporting a half mask of a monkey with large, sunken eyes, the forehead is carved with a serrated crest reminiscent of crocodilian scales, with incised details overall; in polished olive green jade.

Such finely carved mace heads were most probably badges of office or clan affiliation rather than used as weapons. Along with jades and metates, they form part of the funerary offerings of high-ranking personages.

For another crested mace head, see Christie's, New York, November 12, 2004, lot 81 (illus.).

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



La Collection Deletaille

33

Costa Rican Stone Mace Head, Nicoya

Circa AD 1 - 500

Estimate: 4,000 - 6,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

La Collection Deletaille

Costa Rican Stone Mace Head, Nicoya
Circa AD 1 - 500

Length: 5 in (12.7 cm)

PROVENANCE

Alfonso Jimenez, Costa Rica
Lin and Emile Deletaille, Brussels, acquired from the above in
1982
Thence by descent

EXHIBITION

Brussels, Royal Museums of Art and History, *Trésors du
Nouveau Monde*, September 15 - December 27, 1992

LITERATURE

Emile and Lin Deletaille, eds., *Trésors du Nouveau Monde*,
Brussels, 1992, p. 259, fig. 229

CATALOGUE NOTE

Representing a stylized rendition of a tapir's head, probably of a Baird's tapir, one of Central America's largest mammals, here characterized by recessed eyes, flush to the sides of the head, prominent rounded snout projecting forward to create a fleshy and flexible proboscis, and large oval-shaped ears; in a creamy limestone.

Stone mace heads of animals, human heads and abstract forms, were ceremonial weapons attached to wood clubs, used over many centuries in ancient Costa Rica and Peru.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



La Collection Deletaille

34

Coclé Polychrome Bowl

Conte style, Period V, circa AD 800 - 1000

Estimate: 4,000 - 6,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

La Collection Deletaille

Coclé Polychrome Bowl

Conte style, Period V, circa AD 800 - 1000

Diameter: 11 1/2 in (29.2 cm)

PROVENANCE

Fine Arts of Ancient Lands, New York

Lin and Emile Deletaille, Brussels, acquired from the above in 1979

Thence by descent

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CATALOGUE NOTE

The shallow ring-based bowl is painted in brilliant colors with a highly animated shamanic figure with the profile body facing right with wide open mouth, large clawed appendages and a massive tail trimmed by serpentine serrations that encircle the rim. The Conte style is known for building upon the designs of the earlier Tonosi style, but brings a new dynamism and kinetic element to the iconography.

See Armand J. Labbé, *Guardians of the Lifestream, Shamans, Art and Power in Prehispanic Central Panama*, Bowers Museum of Cultural Art Santa Ana, 1995, p. 38, fig. 33 for a similar example and p. 64, table 2, e, f.

Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



La Collection Deletaille

35

Coclé Polychrome Bowl

Conte style, circa AD 800 - 1000

Estimate: 5,000 - 8,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

La Collection Deletaille

Coclé Polychrome Bowl
Conte style, circa AD 800 - 1000

Height: 10 ⁵/₈ in (27 cm)

PROVENANCE

Fine Arts of Ancient Lands, New York
Lin and Emile Deletaille, Brussels, acquired from the above in 1980
Thence by descent

CATALOGUE NOTE

The dancing saurian figure in this ring-based bowl has only three appendages with the leg featuring a particularly large clawed foot. The serpent element, even in a very stylized form in Conte ceramics, is associated with life force. As noted by Armand J. Labbé, “underlying the use of the serpent as an icon for the life force is the belief that this energy is the animating principle in all life-forms, regardless of their external characteristics” (Armand J. Labbé, *Guardians of the Lifestream, Shamans, Art and Power in Prehispanic Central Panama*, Bowers Museum of Cultural Art, Santa Ana, 1995, p. 38).

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Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



36

Dogon or Tellem-Komakan Figure, Mali

Estimate: 30,000 - 50,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

Dogon or Tellem-Komakan Figure, Mali

Height: 24 in (61 cm)

A Carbon-14 dating certificate was issued on November 25, 2024 by the CIRAM laboratory : dating 1299-1402 (probability 95.2%)

PROVENANCE

Mamadou Guindo, Bandiagara, Mali

Private French Collection, acquired from the above in 1967

CATALOGUE NOTE

By Ulysse Gaunet

A major piece of Komakan art

« All the elements are rendered forcefully: the facial features, the ball shaped eyes, the beard, the breasts, the belly, each of them projects forward... » [1]

The Komakan style comprises a small corpus of highly distinctive sculptures, all of which are thought to have been created in and around the village of Komakan, located in the southern part of the Cliff of Bandiagara in Mali. Though it is recognized by experts of the region as one of the major Cliff styles [2], it stands out for the great rarity of its sculptures.

The dating of Dogon Country objects since the 1980s has helped fine-tune the study of sculpture styles in this region and highlighted the great antiquity of Komakan art. In fact, the most remarkable pieces have all been dated between the 13th and 16th centuries. A recent Carbon-14 study of the one at hand revealed that it was made between the 14th and 15th centuries, once again confirming the timeline for the full flourishing of this art form.

The sculpture displays all the attributes required to be included in the very restricted corpus of major Komakan sculptures: an ogival head, protruding eyes framing a pronounced nasal bridge, and a body sculpted in high relief with raised arms meeting at their extremities.

The back of the body rests on a typical conical base. As for the scarification marks, they add to the unique character of this figure: while the chevron-shaped ones at the base are more common, the asymmetry of the uppermost ones creates an interesting sense of momentum, emphasizing the significance of the raised arms, which are associated with rain rituals, as in neighbouring Tellem sculptures from the same period.

Its remarkable state of preservation, combined with a deep patina indicative of frequent use, lends it a close resemblance to the statue presented by Hélène Leloup in *Statuaire Dogon* in 1994, about which the author also pointed out the distinctive nature of its slightly oozing patina. Its aesthetic qualities make it one of the most remarkable exemplars of Komakan art, and it provides an invaluable contribution to comparative studies in this region.

[1] Leloup, H., *Statuaire Dogon*, 1994, fig. 65

[2] Leloup, H., *Statuaire Dogon*, 1994, p. 116 - 117 and De Grunne, B., « *Vers une définition du style soninké* » in *Arts et Cultures*, 2001, p. 85

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



37

Bamana Helmet Mask for the Kono Power Association, Mali

Estimate: 10,000 - 15,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

Bamana Helmet Mask for the *Kono* Power Association, Mali

Height: 34 5⁄8 in (88 cm)

PROVENANCE

Galerie Pierre Robin, Paris

French Private Collection, acquired from the above in 1998

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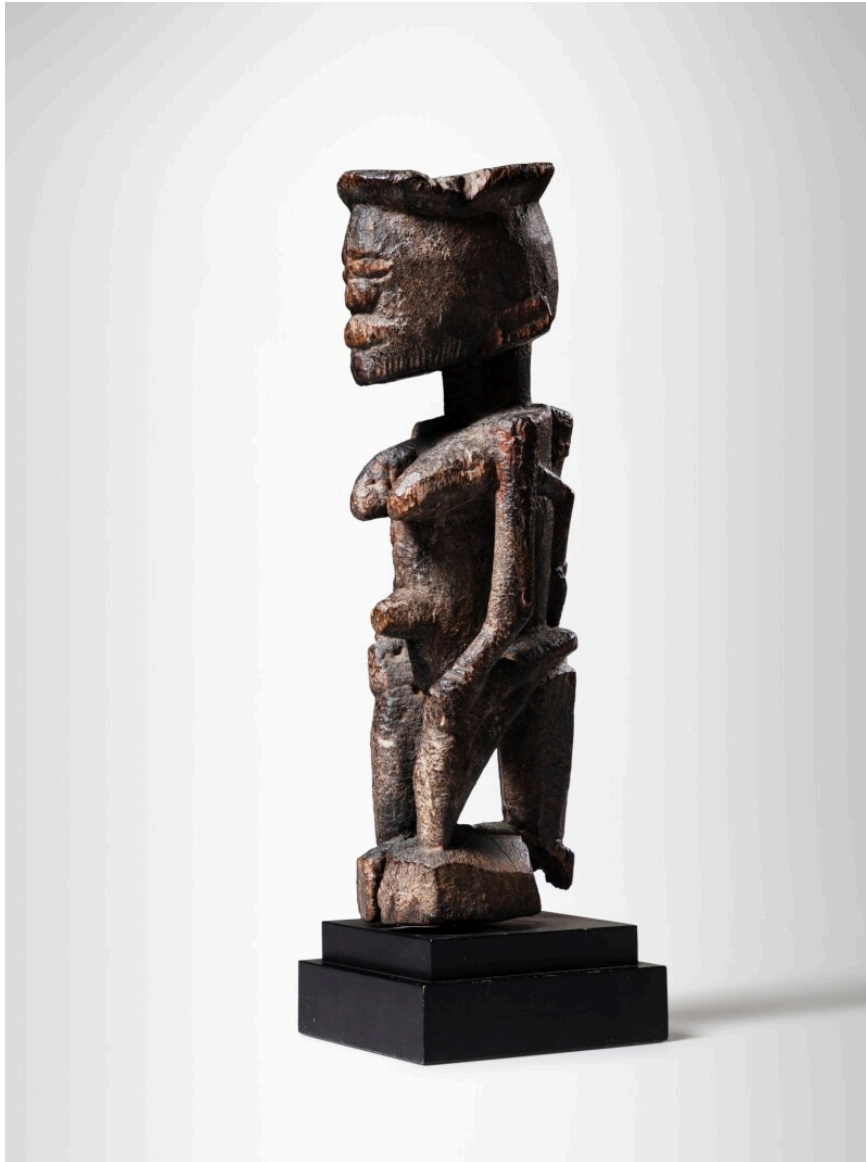
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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



38

Dogon Maternity Figure, Mali

Estimate: 6,000 - 9,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

Dogon Maternity Figure, Mali

Height: 11 7/8 in (30 cm)

PROVENANCE

Galerie Ratton-Hourdé, Paris

Private French Collection, acquired from the above in 1998

CONDITION REPORT

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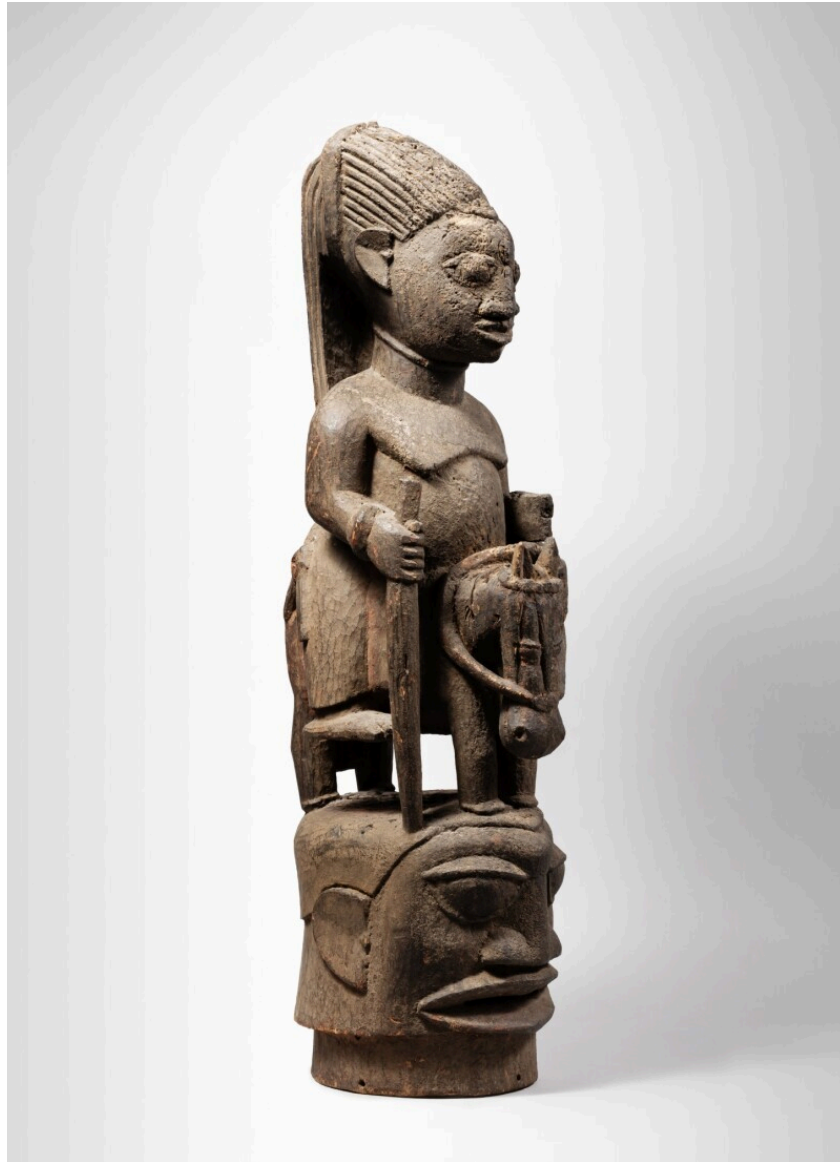
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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



39

Yoruba Helmet Mask, Nigeria

Estimate: 20,000 - 30,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

Yoruba Helmet Mask, Nigeria

Height: 39 ¾ in (100 cm)

PROVENANCE

Pace Primitive, New York, acquired by 1995

Italian Private Collection, acquired from the above in 2003

EXHIBITION

Pace Primitive, New York, *The Art of Yoruba Sculpture and Beadwork*, October 26 - December 2, 1995

Museum of African Art, New York, *Facing the Mask*, September 19, 2002 - March 2, 2003

LITERATURE

Pace Primitive, ed., *The Art of Yoruba Sculpture and Beadwork*, 1995, exhibition invitation

Frank Herreman, *Facing the Mask*, Museum of African Art, New York, 2002, pp. 26 - 27, cat. n° 18

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



40

Baule Portrait Mask, Côte d'Ivoire

Attributed to Owie Kimou (d. 1948) of Kami

Estimate: 50,000 - 70,000 EUR

† VAT reduced rate

DESCRIPTION

Baule Portrait Mask, Côte d'Ivoire
 Attributed to Owie Kimou (d. 1948) of Kami

Height: 10 7⁄8 in (27.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

Acquired *in situ* during the first quarter of the 20th century
 Thence by descent
 Christie's, Paris, *Art Africain et Océanien*, June 20, 2006, lot 92,
 consigned by the above
 Roland and Edith Flak, Paris, acquired at the above auction
 Karl-Ferdinand Schädler Collection, Munich, acquired from the
 above
 Sotheby's, New York, *African, Oceanic and Pre-Columbian Art*,
 May 7, 2016, lot 27, consigned by the above
 Private Collection, acquired at the above auction

EXHIBITION

San Francisco, *Tribal & Textile Arts Show. Fine art of native cultures*, February 9 - 11, 2007
 Paris, Galerie Flak, *Face à Face. Masques secrets, visages révélés*, September 12 - November 3, 2007
 New York, African Art at Madison, AOA *Tribal Art Fair New York*,
 May 10 - 15, 2011

LITERATURE

Tribal & Textile Arts Show. Fine art of native cultures, San Francisco, 2007, p. 64
 Comte, H. and Lascault, G., *Face à Face*, Galerie Flak, Paris, 2007, p. 33
African Art at Madison, AOA Fair, New York, 2011
 Flak, J., *Formes Pures*, Galerie Flak, Paris, 2014
 Goy, B., *Yaouré. Visages du Sacré*, Galerie Eric Hertault, Paris, 2019, p. 5, fig. 3
 Zemanek, D., "Pour une quête d'une vue d'ensemble : Karl-Ferdinand Schädler" in *Tribal Art Magazine*, n° 99, 2021, p. 96, fig. 5

CATALOGUE NOTE

Portrait masks, known as *Mblo*, are one of the most emblematic forms of Baule sculpture. By comparing the present example with a closely related mask, it can be attributed to the master Baule sculptor Owie Kimou de Kami (d. 1948), one of the few traditional Baule artists whose name has come down to us. One of this artist's masterpieces was previously in the collection of Myron Kunin [1], and featured on the cover and back cover of Susan Vogel's reference work, *Baule: African Art, Western Eyes*.

She noted that "*Mblo* masks [...] are one of the oldest of Baule art forms. This refined human face mask, the prototypical Baule object in art collections, is usually a portrait of a particular known individual. [...] More than any other kind of mask, *Mblo* embody the core Baule sculpture style manifested in figures and decorated objects – spoons, combs, pulleys and the like. Lustrous curving surfaces, suggesting clean, healthy, well-fed skin, are set off by delicately textured zones representing coiffures, scarifications, and other ornaments. The idealized faces are introspective, with the high foreheads of intellectual enlightenment and the large downcast eyes of respectful presence in the world. Ornaments above the face [...] are chosen for their beauty, and have no iconographic significance; braided beards, and fine scarifications and coiffures, denote personal beauty, refinement, and a desire to give pleasure to others. [...] The *Mblo* portrait mask was the summit of Baule sculpture, the most beautiful art form [...]." [2].

According to Philipp Ravenhill (*in* Phillips 1995: 142, text to cat. 71), Baule portrait masks were "worn to enact a series of characters who dance to music with a participatory audience. The performance climaxes with the arrival of [*Mblo*] in human form, especially portrait masks inspired by actual people. The subject portrayed in, and honored by, a mask [occasionally danced] with it and address[ed] it affectionately as 'namesake' (*Ndoma*). As in Baule figurative sculpture that depicts otherworldly mates or bush spirits, the face of the mask is critical to Baule ideas of personhood and

verisimilitude. It is in looking at the mask's gaze that one perceives it as a person with a living presence."

And Vogel continues: Baule sculptures "are appreciated for their subtle rhythms and a beauty that stops short of sweetness. To the Western eye, an essence of Baule style is a balanced asymmetry that enlivens while suggesting stability and calm. [...] To an art historian, the most consistent feature of Baule art, and one expressed across the wide variety of Baule object types, is a kind of peaceful containment. Faces tend to have downcast eyes [...] so that Westerners might feel that the mood of much classical Baule art is introspective." [3].

[1] Sotheby's, New York, *In Pursuit Of Beauty: The Myron Kunin Collection Of African Art*, November 11, 2014, lot 32

[2] Vogel, S., *Baule : African Art, Western Eyes*, Washington D.C., 1997, pp. 141 - 144

[3] Vogel, S., *Baule : African Art, Western Eyes*, Washington D.C., 1997, p. 26 and 28

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



41

We-Yobe Mask, Côte d'Ivoire

Estimate: 10,000 - 15,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

We-Yobe Mask, Côte d'Ivoire

Height: 11 7/8 in (30 cm)

PROVENANCE

Lucien Van de Velde, Antwerp, acquired by 1989
Sotheby's, Paris, *Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie*, December 12,
2017, lot 58
Belgian Private Collection
Leinuo Zhang Collection, Milan, acquired in 2021

LITERATURE

Boyer, A.-M., *Visions d'Afrique. We*, Milan, 2019, p. 68 and p.
108, fig. 3
Amrouche, P. et al., *Âmes. Masques de la collection d'art
africain de Leinuo Zhang*, Milan, 2023, pp. 94 - 97

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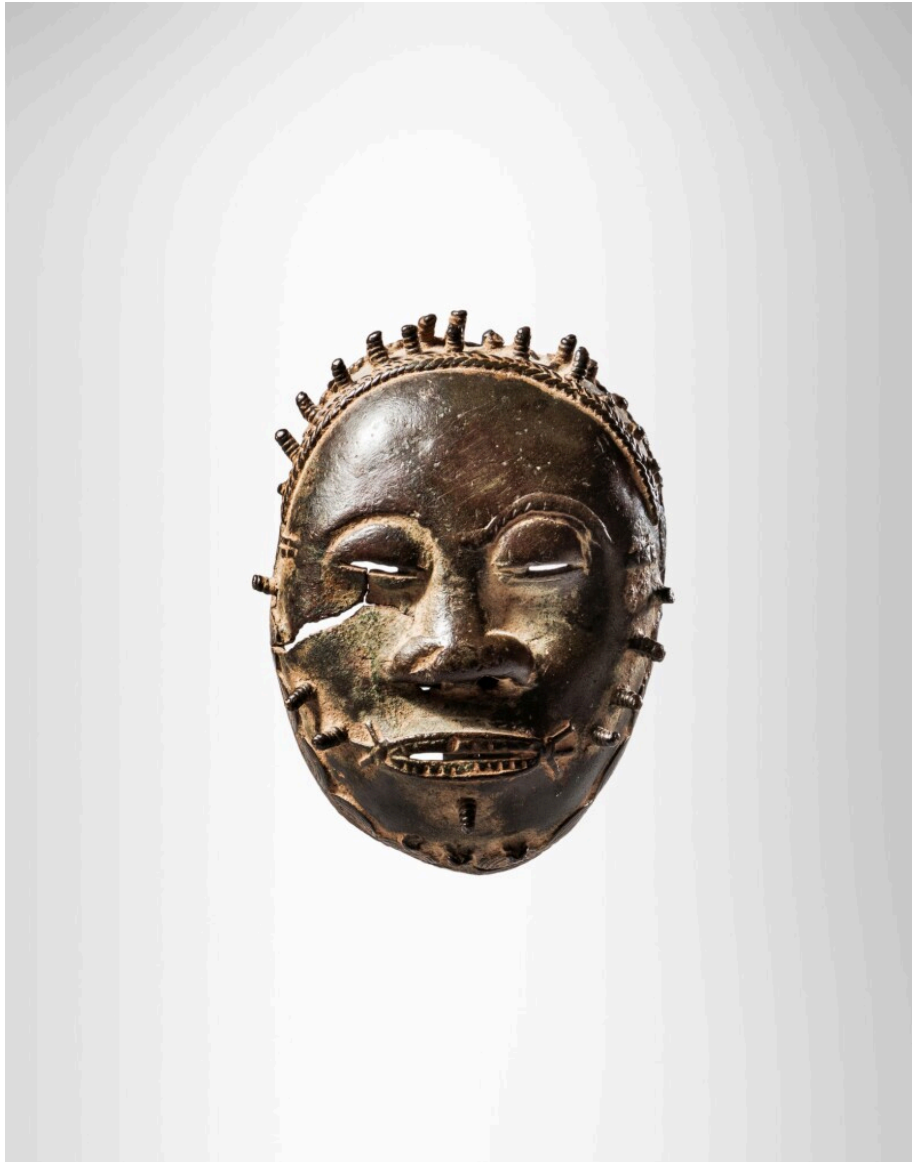
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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



42

Baule Miniature Mask, Côte d'Ivoire

Estimate: 3,000 - 5,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

Baule Miniature Mask, Côte d'Ivoire

Height: 3 ¾ in (8.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

René Rasmussen (1912-1979), Paris
Marc de Monbrison (1941-1985), Paris
Marie and Philippe de Thézy, Paris, acquired from the above in 1981
Calmels Cohen, Drouot Montaigne, Paris, *Collection Marie et Philippe de Thézy*, June 8, 2005, lot 50
Private Collection, Paris, acquired at the above auction

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



Property from the Collection of Barbara and Brian Wolfowitz

43

Mano or Dan-Gio Mask, Liberia or Côte d'Ivoire

Estimate: 40,000 - 60,000 EUR

† VAT reduced rate

DESCRIPTION

Mano or Dan-Gio Mask, Liberia or Côte d'Ivoire

Height: 8 5⁄8 in (22 cm)

PROVENANCE

Reportedly Pierre Verité, Galerie Carrefour, Paris, 1929
Olivier Le Corneur (1906-1991), Paris, reportedly acquired from the above in 1929
Ben Birillo (1928-2020), New York
Private Collection, Los Angeles, acquired from the above
Sotheby's, New York, *Important Tribal Art*, November 9, 1993, lot 68, consigned by the above
Barbara and Brian Wolfowitz, acquired at the above auction

CATALOGUE NOTE

By Bertrand Goy

Moving up the Cavally River, from the Guinea Coast to its source, in a vast area that knows no borders, between the Saint John and Sassandra rivers, Côte d'Ivoire, Republic of Guinea and Liberia have always been the stage for spectacular masquerades. Racing masks, dancing masks, wicked masks, angry masks, mendicant masks, vengeful masks... "Some bring peace, others worry", they take part in all the important events of village society, whether sad or happy, funereal or festive, threatening or peaceful, largely public or strictly private.

While the exact "birthplace" of this mask from the Wolfowitz collection is unknown, we can nevertheless trace its storied life, which started in the hands of Pierre Verité, who began as a "primitive" art dealer in Montparnasse in the 1920s. Its next owner, Olivier Le Corneur, had a gallery on the boulevard St Germain in the 1950s onwards, and was known for his taste and discernment. The mask was finally acquired by the protégé of the famous Léo Castelli, the painter Ben Birillo, considered to have been one of the proponents of pop art. He was an astute collector of classical African and Oceanic art, sourcing from renowned dealers such as John Klejman.

The pronounced curvature of the mask, the rounded forehead forming a convex angle with the bottom half of the face, the attachment holes for the traditional, plant fiber headdress and possibly cowrie shells, the cylindrical stud on the chin, the metal teeth, the upturned nose, and the wide-set eyes all suggest that this mask was carved by a Liberian Gio or Mano sculptor. With the exception of the missing, protruding ears, this mask meets all the criteria that, according to Dr. Monni Adams, help differentiate a female Mano mask - which she indicates are rarely found in private collections - from that of the Dan of Côte d'Ivoire [1].

A former curator at Harvard's Peabody Museum, Dr. Adams was able to support her theory thanks to the extensive documentation available at the institution,

which holds the collection of hundreds of photographs taken in 1929 by missionary and ethnologist George Schwab. Moreover, Dr. Adams would have at her disposition the 247 masks collected by her colleague George Harley, a Methodist missionary who arrived in Liberia in 1925 and lived for 35 years in Ganta, in the Giomano region.

Harley collected several examples similar to the one in the Wolfowitz collection, including one [2] found in Be Town, east of Ganta, which also bears traces of white pigment depicting a sort of band covering the eyes. Vittorio Mangio, an antique dealer in Monrovia in the 1960s, also owned a similar example, which he also attributed to the Mano. It is often unclear what function masks from this culture served as they often donned different roles: for Vittorio Mangio, the mask might have been used to facilitate female fertility; for Harley, its name, “*Yei dia*” (Laughing all the time), suggests a different use.

Nevertheless, the mask is most likely representing a female subject, judging by the numerous photographs, taken by George Schwab among others, of acrobatic dances in which “snake men” throw a small girl in the air, whose eyes are similarly painted with a white band. However, the choreography performed by the Liberian “snake man” is similar to the “*Simbo*” dance performed by the Dan of Côte d'Ivoire, the former's sister culture. Other traces of red pigment around this mask's eyes do not further confirm the object's origins as this pigment was commonly used by sculptors in the three bordering countries.

Once again, if the function of this mask remains a mystery, as well as a slight doubt as to its exact origins on either side of the Cavally River, it's clear that this sculpture is of remarkable quality, and that its age is attested to by the brilliant brown patina on its face and the superb lacquer on its reverse.

[1] Adams, M., “Locating the Mano Mask”, *African Arts*, Los Angeles, 2010, vol. 43, n° 2, pp. 16 - 37

[2] Peabody Harvard Museum, masque clan Somi, inv. n° 37-77-50/2791

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



Property from the Collection of Barbara and Brian Wolfowitz

44

Dan Mask, Côte d'Ivoire

Estimate: 80,000 - 120,000 EUR

† VAT reduced rate

DESCRIPTION

Dan Mask, Côte d'Ivoire

Height: 9 ¼ in (23.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

Lucien Van de Velde, Antwerp
Lance Entwistle, London, acquired from the above in 1983
Private Collection, New York, acquired from the above
Sotheby's, New York, *Important Tribal Art*, May 8, 1989, lot 32,
consigned by the above
Barbara and Brian Wolfowitz, acquired at the above auction

CATALOGUE NOTE

By Bertrand Goy

This other mask from the Wolfowitz Collection belongs to the corpus of harmonious, figurative representations, shared by the Mande-speaking peoples of Guinea (Konor), Liberia (Gio and Mano) and Côte d'Ivoire (Dan). Artists from these cultures have produced a wide range of naturalistic portraits that stand in stark contrast to the objects made by their *Kru*-speaking neighbors, the Wé and Kran, who are better known for their more expressionist masks.

It is difficult to determine the exact social function this mask and similar ones assumed, as each object is unique, endowed with its own identity - which can be freely modified - its own name, and its own soul. It would therefore be misleading to rely merely on the form or style of these versatile objects to deduce the functions they fulfilled. Although ethnologists have been able to establish a nomenclature, they nevertheless have struggled to clearly connect a mask's form or style with a specific use [1], a connection which often only interests art lovers if its use suggests the age of the object. This is the case with this mask, whose prolonged use is confirmed by the beautiful glaze on its reverse, where a dancer's face once rested, and the second row of holes on certain parts of its outer rim, made to hang adorning fibers, cowrie shells, or hair, drilled after the wear of the original holes.

Although the exact function of this mask remains unclear - one can rule out the possibility of its use in masked races during which only masks with round, open eyes could be functionally worn - its geographic origins are clear. Its evident similarities with a mask collected in 1933 [2] by the famous Antwerp anthropologist Frans Olbrecht confirms that it is from Flampleu. Located in the Eighteen Mountains region of Côte d'Ivoire, on the road between Danané and Man, this village is part of the "nuclear Dan style" center, a term coined by Pieter Jan Vandenhouste, a student of Olbrecht, when he visited the region five years later.

Of virtually equal size, the perfect oval faces of Wolfowitz Dan mask and the Olbrecht Dan mask bear too many similarities to be considered coincidental, starting with the rendering of the eyes; they both seem to be emerging from a long slumber, partly closed by heavy, puffy eyelids, stripped with three parallel lines. The curved shape of their eyes is mirrored by the similar arch of the eyebrows. On both masks, a straight, sharp-edged nose widens at its tip, bearing flared nostrils which heighten the sensuality of the well-defined philtrum and the full, finely traced lips. The *Oldfieldia* wood from which the masks were probably carved have absorbed the “oiling” of the objects over time, resulting in an attractive, shiny brown patina.

With due deference to the Africa Museum, home of the Olbrecht Dan mask, the Wolfowitz Dan mask is a masterpiece of its type and stands apart because of the masterful precision of its proportions, the virility of the face only heightened by its prominent cheekbones, the characteristic keloid line on the forehead extending the rib line of the nose, and the precise carving marks visible on the inside, testifying to the sculptor's confident hand... The gifted artist who carved this portrait of the “handsome boy” with such enticing features, imbued it with both his own ideal of masculine grace and universal beauty.

[1] « L'apparence du masque ne dit souvent rien sur sa fonction », in Himmelheber, H., *Negerkunst und Negerkünstler*, Braunschweig, Klinkhart & Biermann, 1960, p. 159

[2] AfricaMuseum, Tervuren (inv. n° EO.1967.63.118)

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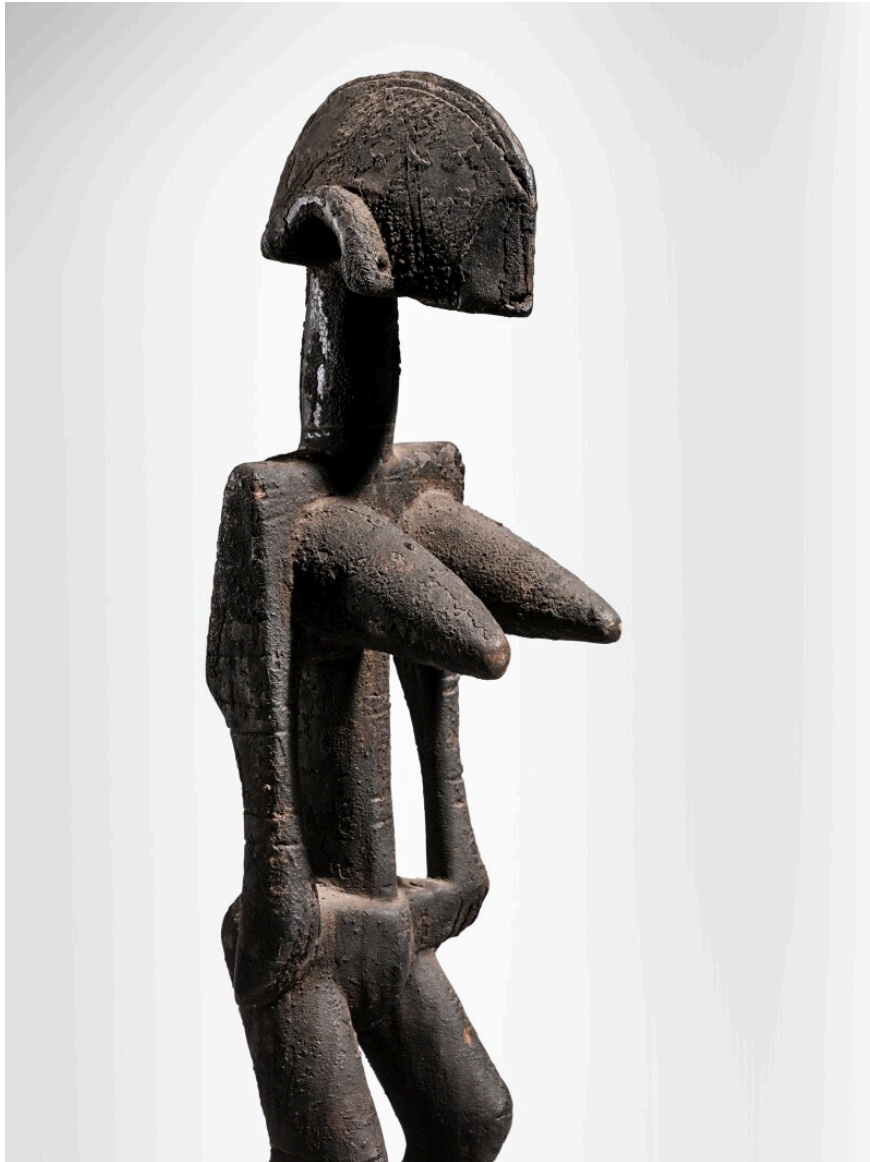
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Property from the Collection of Barbara and Brian Wolfowitz

45

Bamana Female Figure, Mali

Estimate: 100,000 - 150,000 EUR

† VAT reduced rate

DESCRIPTION

Bamana Female Figure, Mali

Height: 21 ¼ in (54 cm)

PROVENANCE

Henri Kamer (1927-1992), Cannes / New York, acquired by 1970
Possibly Vittorio Mangiò, Monza
European Private Collection
Sotheby's, London, *Tribal Art*, June 24, 1985, lot 14
Barbara and Brian Wolfowitz, acquired at the above auction

EXHIBITION

Zurich, Kunsthhaus, *Die Kunst von Schwarz-Afrika*, October 31, 1970 - January 17, 1971
The Hague, Gemeentemuseum, *Kunst uit Afrika-Rond de Niger de machtige rivier*, July 3 - September 5, 1971
Munich, Haus der Kunst, *Welt Kulturen und Moderne Kunst*, June 16 - September 30, 1972

LITERATURE

Leuzinger, E., *Die Kunst von Schwarz-Afrika*, Zurich, 1970, p. 41, n° B5
Leuzinger, E., *Kunst uit Afrika: Rond de Niger-de machtige rivier*, The Hague, 1971, p. 45, n° B5
Wichmann, S., *Welt Kulturen und Moderne Kunst: Die Begegnung der Europäischen Kunst und Musik im 19. Und 20. Jahrhundert mit Asien, Afrika, Oceanien, Afro- und Indo-Amerika*, Munich, 1972, p. 459, n° 1780
Van Geertruyen, G., "Le style Nimba" in *Arts d'Afrique Noire*, n° 31, 1979, p. 32, fig. 13
Kerchache, J., Paudrar, J.-L. and Stephan, L., *L'Art africain*, Paris, Citadelles & Mazenod, 1988, p. 369, n° 288
Kerchache, J., Paudrar, J.-L. and Stephan, L., *Art of Africa*, New York, Harry N. Abrams, 1993, p. 369, n° 288
Bacquart, J.-B., *The Tribal Arts of Africa*, Paris, 1998, p. 65, n° 9

CATALOGUE NOTE

Bamana artists represented their canons of female beauty through a highly refined and inventive aesthetic tradition, which we see today as figural abstraction. At Sotheby's London in 1985, Barbara et Brian Wolfowitz acquired this elegant "cubistic" female statue, which had been shown and published on the occasion of the landmark exhibition and book *Die Kunst von Schwarz-Afrika* in Zurich in 1970. While in the Wolfowitz collection, it was included in the Mazenod Editions book *L'Art Africain* by Jacques Kerchache, Jean-Louis Paudrat and Lucien Stéphan, and other notable publications.

While the treatment of the body of this figure conforms to the proportions and forms seen in other celebrated Bamana figures, the present example from the Wolfowitz collection is particularly geometric in conception. A distinctive, neatly-formed head, which in profile reads as a semicircular arch and a flat chin parallel to the ground, projects horizontally from the neck, longer than it is tall. The form recalls those seen in some styles of Bamana *Ci Wara* antelope headdresses (see for example LaGamma 2002: 88, n° 42). The ears echo the curve of the top of the head, formed by smaller arches in horizontal relief on either side of the head. The neck is formed of a straight upright cylinder, which continues down in a straight line through the shoulders and forms the body, which sits upon a pelvis and legs which break from this cylinder in their own faceted shape. The large, conical breasts project dramatically from the faceted mass making up the shoulders and arms. The legs are lightly bent, in a spring-loaded dancer's stance, ready to jump. Rhythmic patterns adorn the surface of the figure, evoking the scarification decorating the bodies of young Bamana women.

Nyeleni female figures played an important role in the initiation ceremonies of the *Jo*, a religious society that helped to provide social cohesion and order in many southern Bamana communities. Once every seven years, young Bamana initiates who have been studying the rites and ideas of the *Jo* and preparing for their ceremonial "re-birth" are led to a secluded bush where a

symbolic "killing of the *Jo*" takes place. This event marks the attainment of adulthood for the initiates - known as *Jodenw* - after which they travel to various villages demonstrating their knowledge of the *Jo* society through song and dance in exchange for gifts. On their travels, the *Jodenw* carry stylized *Nyeleni* figures, which "evoke the young girl in her ideal state with the highest degree of physical attraction" (Ezra, *Figure Sculpture of the Bamana of Mali*, 1983, pp. 11 - 12). As such, *Nyeleni* figures represent the canons of Bamana female beauty.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



Property from the Collection of Barbara and Brian Wolfowitz

46

Bembe or Buyu Ancestor Figure, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Estimate: 300,000 - 500,000 EUR

† VAT reduced rate

DESCRIPTION

Bembe or Buyu Ancestor Figure, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Height: 21 ¼ in (54 cm)

PROVENANCE

Pierre Darteville, Brussels, presumably acquired *in situ* in the early 1970s

European Private Collection

Sotheby's, London, *Tribal Art*, June 24, 1985, lot 56, consigned by the above

Barbara and Brian Wolfowitz, acquired at the above auction

LITERATURE

Kerchache, J., Paudrat, J.-L. and Stephan, L., *L'art Africain*, Paris, 1988, p. 572, cat. n° 1010

Bacquart, J.-B., *The Tribal Arts of Africa*, Paris, 1998, p. 152, fig. 5

Darteville, V. and Plisnier, V., *Pierre Darteville et les Arts Premiers. Mémoire et continuité*, Milan, 2021, vol. II, p. 192, fig. 217

CATALOGUE NOTE

In the eastern regions of the present-day Democratic Republic of the Congo, near the western shore of Lake Tanganyika, one of Africa's most refined, artistic, and inventive pre-colonial sculptural traditions developed as a means to commemorate and venerate important ancestors. Not to be confused with the Kongo-adjacent Bembe or Beembe of Congo-Brazzaville, a separate culture a great distance to the west known for their diminutive figural sculpture, the Eastern Bembe cultures produced ingenious sculptors, whose work has been celebrated since its "discovery" by the outside world, and especially since art-historical studies of the area began in the late 1940s. Study continued in the 1970s and 1980s, and more recently our understanding of these artistic traditions has been revisited and updated to reflect a more nuanced art-historical analysis. The works in question have been called, sometimes interchangeably and referring sometimes to a culture group, and at others to an artistic style: Pre-Bembe, Sikasingo, Basikasingo, Kasingo, Buyu, and Boyo, to give a partial list, or combinations thereof. The history of appellations associated with these works serves as a reminder that the naming of art styles by outsiders, that is, western art historians, can obscure the mixing, movement, influence and transferral of styles and traditions in pre-colonial Africa.

In terms of affinity, sculpture from the Eastern Bembe region has been called 'cubist' by observers relating them to the artistic movements of the European avant-garde, especially in comparison to related traditions of ancestor statuary among nearby and inter-related Hemba, Lega, Songye, Tabwa and Luba groups, whose existant sculpture is more numerous. The artistic concepts expressed by these Eastern sculptors are indeed structural and geometric, and embody a novel and rather strikingly unusual conception of the human form. While they follow the same general scale, formulae, and to some extent iconography as Hemba, Luba, and Tabwa ancestor statuary, the Eastern Bembe styles are distinctive and instantly recognizable. The comparison to Cubism, while interesting, is not sufficient to fully describe their artistic quality. The sculptors who composed these sacred ancestral images

maneuvered the tension between geometry and fluidity, straight lines and curves, abstraction and naturalism; the result at the height of these traditions was a hieratic portrayal of the nobility, wisdom, and spiritual power of the all-important progenitors of the sculptor and/or his clientele.

The present figure is a quintessential example from one of the identifiable ateliers within these eastern traditions, expressing very well this tension of form: with a diamond-shaped face crossed by vertical and horizontal ridges separating flat faceted quadrants; horizontal, coffee bean shaped eyes; a deeply-pointed triangular form supporting the nose and mouth which descend from the face, dramatically separated from the cylindrical neck; a ridged coiffure made up of similarly-faceted geometries and sweeping backward from the face; shoulders formed of a faceted mass which seems to wrap around the top of the body; a cylindrical torso with gentle curves; openwork arms which separate from the body at the armpits but then return to connect together with the torso just under the pointed umbilicus; and the whole set upon short but massive legs.

Eight figures are known to survive from a workshop that has been identified using Morellian analysis of the extant corpus. De Grunne (2001) and others have referred to the sculptor (or sculptors) of this group of eight as the Master of Fizi, as unfortunately his proper name has not been remembered, after the village and territory by that name where works from this atelier were reportedly collected, in South Kivu province of the present-day Democratic Republic of the Congo.

There has been confusion in the literature and archives regarding the number of works known from this atelier, owing partially to the great similarity between certain of these works, which closely conform to a prescribed type. The work offered here, which was acquired by Brian and Barbara Wolfowitz from Sotheby's London in 1985, is one and the same as the work illustrated as an exemplar of the type in the Mazenod Editions book *L'Art Africain* by Jacques Kerchaches, Jean-Louis Paudrat, and Lucien Stéphan, as well as by Jean-Baptiste Bacquart in *The Tribal Arts of Africa* of 1998. It is not to

be confused with the very similar figure published in Marie-Louise Bastin's *Introduction aux Arts de l'Afrique Noire*, exhibited at the Palais des Beau-Arts in Brussels in *Utotombo. Kunst uit Zwart-Afrika in Belgisch firive-bezit*, and sold at Christie's Paris on June 15, 2002, which was previously in the collections of Jernander, Vranken-Hoet, Perinet, and Bobby Hass, then later in the Robert T. Wall Family Collection.

Thus the known corpus of this artist (or artists) should be revised to include eight sculptures, which is the number that Pierre Darteville approximated had survived by this artist (2009):

- The figure previously in the collection of Gustave and Franyo Schindler, New York, published in William Rubin, ed., *Primitivism in 20th Century Art. Affinities of the Tribal and the Modern*, 1984, p. 343, and sold at Binoche et Giquello, Paris, March 21, 2018, lot 54.
- The figure from the collection of Daniel and Marian Malcolm, Tenafly, New Jersey (Schweizer 2013: 24, n° 94), which Pierre Darteville reported he acquired in the city of Kalemie (formerly Albertville) on the coast of Lake Tanganyika in between 1965 and 1968.
- The figure today in the Fowler Museum at UCLA, Los Angeles, California (Vogel, *Perspectives: Angles on African Art*, 1987, p. 58).
- The figure today in the Cleveland Museum of Art (inv. n° 1969.10), Cleveland, Ohio, acquired by Katherine C. Wright from John J. Klejman in 1962.
- The figure previously in the collections of Ben Tursch, Mon Steyaert, Jean-Pierre and Anne Jernander, Guillaume Vrancken-Hoet, Michel Perinet, Bobby Haas, and Robert T. Wall published by Marie-Louise Bastin in 1984 (*Introduction aux Arts d'Afrique Noire*, n° 381), and sold at Christie's Paris, June 15, 2002, lot 308, and which has sometimes been confused with the present figure.
- A figure with the proper right lower arm lost, previously in the Walter and Molly Bareiss collection

(Neyt, *Arts traditionnels et histoire au Zaïre*, 1981, pp. 304-305), sold at Sotheby's New York, May 16, 2008, lot 175 and shown at BRUNEF 2017.

- The figure previously with Pierre Darteville and Emile Deletaille, acquired by 'Collection Z' in 1970 and sold at Sotheby's Paris on December 12, 2018, now in a European private collection.
- The present figure, previously with Pierre Darteville (and presumably field collected by him) and acquired by Brian and Barbara Wolfowitz at Sotheby's London in 1985.

Luc de Heusch (under his pseudonym Luc Zangrie), Nicolas de Kun, and Daniel Biebuyck made detailed studies of the lineages and interrelated groups within the groups of the eastern Congo, some of which involve suppositions and theories which contradict one another. Biebuyck supposed that there was an archetypal tradition among "Pre-Bembe" hunters, which influenced the style of later groups, the Buyu, Sikasingo, and Boyo. It has been debated whether these groups influenced or were influenced by the Luba (LaGamma 2002: 75). Viviane Baecke (2017: 77-79) refutes Biebuyck's interpretation, relying on the field studies conducted by Pol-Pierre Gossiau, and suggests that the Eastern Bembe adopted the older style of Buyu ancestor statuary in order to legitimate their claims to land, under colonial pressure, by showing a long ancestral lineage and thereby legitimating their presence and prestige.

Discussing the figure from the so-called 'Master of Fizi' workshop formerly in the Bareiss collection Baecke continues (*ibid.*: 82): "Gossiau identifies it as being among the works from the Northern Nganja and Southern Lulenge sectors. A significant number of his interlocutors attributed the piece to the Be'ekesi, a small family belonging to the Basombo clan, which lived south of the Bashilugezi, between the villages of Katanga and Mabenga, very close to the Bembe border with the Bùyù". This family of sculptors (a father and his two sons) had an excellent and far-reaching reputation, and "had ostensibly worked for the Basombo, the

Bashilugezi, the Bashihasingo, the Obekulu, and the Baseti, as well as for certain Bùyù groups, like the Basunga and the Benyabemba, and even Bangù Bangù families".

The suggestion that the workshop in question in fact encompassed two generations and three individuals may explain the variation in the 'Master of Fizi' group, although further study will be required in order to develop a more nuanced understanding of this highly skilled atelier.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



Property from the Collection of Barbara and Brian Wolfowitz

47

Fang Reliquary Figure, Equatorial Guinea or northern Gabon

Estimate: 250,000 - 350,000 EUR

† VAT reduced rate

DESCRIPTION

Fang Reliquary Figure, Equatorial Guinea or northern Gabon

Height: 17 ½ in (43.5 cm)

Stand by Kichizô Inagaki (1876-1951)

PROVENANCE

French Private Collection, circa 1920-1930

Baron Frédéric "Freddy" Rolin (1919-2001) Collection, Brussels / New York

Arman (1928-2005) Collection, Vence / New York

Loudmer-Poulain, Paris, *Arts Primitifs*, June 20, 1980, lot 302

Sotheby's, London, *Important Tribal Art*, June 29 and 30, 1987, lot 396

Barbara and Brian Wolfowitz, acquired at the above auction

LITERATURE

Perrois, L., *Arts du Gabon, Arts d'Afrique Noire. Les Plastiques du Bassin de l'Ogooue*, Arnouville, 1979, p. 83, n° 72

Conru, K., *Collection Baron Freddy Rolin*, Brussels, 2021, p. 126, n° 92

CATALOGUE NOTE

By Pierre Amrouche

Once anchored on a posterior stem, the figure, with his broad shoulders and strong legs, represents a powerful male individual. The figure, head upright, with his large, rounded forehead and elaborate, braided coiffure, is characterized by his concave face whose eyes are made of nailed, round copper or brass discs. The figure likely held a stylized cup in his hands, clasped together in a votive gesture.

Exactly when this important *Byeri* was brought back to Europe is unknown, but it was certainly early in the 20th century, as were almost all of the objects fitted for stands by Inagaki. *Okak* figures were mostly collected in Equatorial Guinea, formerly referred to as Rio Muni, particularly during the period when, in 1907, Gunther Tessmann studied the Fang and their art (*Die Pangwe*, Wasmuth, Berlin, 1913). Marta Sierra Delage, of Madrid's Museo Nacional de Ethnología, published a major survey of *Okak* objects in Madrid in 1980, which provides a comprehensive insight on the region's artistic styles. While it is apparent that *Okak* statues share some characteristics with certain *Ntoumou* sculptures, particularly in the depiction of long cylindrical busts, *Okak* objects are stylistically consistent and therefore unlikely to be mistaken for another culture's artistic production. There also exist three very large-scale sculptures in this unique *Okak* style from the Rio Muni region, including one from the collection of sculptor Arman, which is shown in the catalogue for the 1992 Marseille exhibition, *Byeri Fang* (p. 188), by Louis Perrois. The figure is modeled similarly, also with round metal eyes, and no scarification. The sculptural qualities, patina, and age of the present *Byeri* make it a major work in the *Okak* corpus.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



Property from the Collection of Barbara and Brian Wolfowitz

48

Fang Reliquary Figure, Gabon

Estimate: 150,000 - 250,000 EUR

† VAT reduced rate

DESCRIPTION

Fang Reliquary Figure, Gabon

Height: 18 ¼ in (46.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

Possibly Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum für Völkerkunde,
Cologne, Germany
Joseph and Doris Gerofsky Collection, New York
Sotheby's, London, *Important Tribal Art*, June 29 and 30, 1987,
lot 45
Barbara and Brian Wolfowitz, acquired at the above auction

CATALOGUE NOTE

By Pierre Amrouche

The powerful sculpture is an abstracted representation of a muscular male ancestor. The figure rests on a posterior support which was also used, like a monstrance, in ceremonies where the lineage of the clan was recited by an orator who would be hidden behind a screen of banana leaves. The head boasts an imposing coiffure with parallel braids curving down along the nape of the neck. The face is expressive, under a large, rounded forehead adorned with scarification, a gaze narrowed by his hooded eyelids, and a mouth forming a classic Fang “pout”. In keeping with the Mvaï Fang style, the figure embodies key characteristics of the corpus: a curved abdomen, a protruding umbilicus, an engraved “cravate” scarification, and the tall, ridged coiffure. These relatively sophisticated objects are the work of a small ethnic group living between the Ntoundou and the Betsi, as Louis Perrois notes in *Byéri Fang* (Marseille, 1992, p. 52). The majestic work is imbued with a sense of sacred interiority.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



Property from the Ferber Collection

49

Kota-Ndassa Janiform Reliquary Guardian Figure, Gabon

Estimate: 200,000 - 400,000 EUR

† VAT reduced rate

DESCRIPTION

Kota-Ndassa Janiform Reliquary Guardian Figure, Gabon

Height: 26 ½ in (68 cm)

PROVENANCE

Simone de Monbrison, Paris

Merton D. Simpson, New York

Baron Frédéric "Freddy" Rolin (1919-2001) Collection, Brussels / New York

Private Collection, West Germany, acquired from the above

F. Rolin & Co., New York, reacquired from the above

Herbert and Edith Ferber, New York, acquired from the above in October 8, 1981

Thence by descent to the present owners

LITERATURE

Alain and Françoise Chaffin, *L'art Kota. Les figures de reliquaire*, Meudon, 1979, p. 207, cat. n° 108

CATALOGUE NOTE

Of the great number of styles and variations in the corpus of Kota reliquary sculpture, the large-scale Kota Ndassa figures, which often reach heights of 60 centimeters and more, are among the most celebrated. Distinguished first and foremost by their especially large scale and ornate richness of decoration, these Ndassa figures also share what Louis Perrois has described as “a certain graphic naturalism, contrasting with the stylizing impulse of most other Kota variants.” (Sotheby's, ed., *African, Oceanic & Pre-Columbian Art*, May 2012, lot 131, p. 116). Further to this ‘naturalism’, the hallmarks of the Ndassa style are seen in the convex face of the present Janus example: a generally oval face, surmounted by a broad crescent and flanked by ample side-coiffures, terminating in “duck tails”, all atop a cylindrical neck and well-proportioned diamond-shaped lozenge. Ndassa sculptor-blacksmiths mastered the use of multi-colored metals to create dazzling visual contrasts, employing reddish copper, yellow brass, and grey-black iron; the artist who created the present figure from the Ferber collection was particularly adept at the mixing of different color metals, with V-shaped sections of alternating color emanating from the center of the face, divided by lines formed in relief. The eyes are centered vertically on the face, and depicted in narrow horizontal lidded coffee-bean shape, beneath arched brows. There are incised lines falling across the copper fields that define the cheeks, from eye to jaw. These have been described as “tears” as they seem to cascade down from the eyes, and can be read as if the subject is weeping.

Discussing the probable geographic origins of the related Ndassa figure from the collection of the sculptor Arman, Perrois (*ibid.*) continues: “In his monumental 1953 work *Contribution à l'ethnographie des Kuta I*, pastor-ethnographer Efraim Andersson, the great expert on the ‘Kuta’, or ‘Kota’ peoples of equatorial Africa, illustrated a closely reliquary figure with a convex face, a broad transverse headcrest, and side-coiffures terminating in volutes [Andersson, *Contribution à l'ethnographie des Kuta I*, 1953, p. 341, fig. 37] [...]. He noted that this important *mbuli-viti* had been collected *in situ* in the

1920s by the pastor Karl Laman for the Svenska Missionförbundets Museum in Stockholm. The same object, with its convex face, is also seen in a photograph taken by The Reverend Jacobson before 1912, showing young Kota men wearing bark cloth aprons, carrying traditional weapons, and displaying reliquary figures (see fig. 1). [...] Particularly significant to our study is Andersson's indication that the related work comes from the Mossendjo region of the former French Congo (southwest of present-day Congo-Brazzaville), the epicenter of the missionary activities of Swedish evangelists before the Second World War. It was also in the southern part of the Kota region that The Reverend Efraim Andersson conducted the bulk of his ethnographic surveys from 1935 until the 1950s, amongst the Wumbu, the Ndassa, and the Obamba [see Andersson, *Contribution à l'ethnographie des Kuta I*, 1953 and Andersson, *Contribution à l'ethnographie des Kuta II*, 1974]. The area within the triangle formed by the towns of Mossendjo, Sibiti, and Zanaga (all in present-day Republic of Congo) was among others populated by Kota groups, namely the Wumbu and the Ndassa. In this context it is worth remembering that the designation 'Kota' is only a collective name of convenience, as each cultural group of equatorial Africa referred to by the name 'Kota' also bears a more specific name. The Ndassa are culturally and linguistically distant cousins of the Northern Kota, the Mahongwe, the Shamaye, and the Shaké of the Ivindo basin. Already centuries ago, their migratory movement had already brought them from Southern Cameroon to present-day Congo, traversing the whole of eastern Gabon from North to South. Some Ndassa communities, with small populations, remained behind in the region of the Upper Ogooué River in Gabon."

It was an Ndassa figure that helped to introduce America and the world to the genius of African art, as an example from this small corpus sourced by Paul Guillaume was shown as a highlight in the photographer Alfred Stieglitz's *Gallery 291* in 1914. The exhibition held there, which Stieglitz called "possibly the most important show we have ever had", was one of the very first exhibitions to show African sculptures as art, rather than as mere specimens of ethnographical interest,

more than 20 years before James Johnson Sweeney's legendary exhibition *African Negro Art* was held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. In 1930 in Paris, an Ndassa Kota was shown at the legendary exhibition at Galerie Pigalle which served similarly to introduce African art "as art" to a wider Parisian audience. Thus from the very beginning of the Western avant-garde's love affair with African sculpture, Ndassa figures have been among its icons.

The well-known Kota figure selected by Sweeney to represent the category for the 1935 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art from the collection of Helena Rubinstein was later owned by William Rubin, the important MoMA curator and champion of the Abstract Expressionists. Rubin was a great admirer of the group of artists known as the New York School and contributed to their canonization, acquiring their work for his own collection and for the MoMA. Many of the artists in this group are today household names: Franz Kline, Robert Motherwell, Jackson Pollock, Barnett Newman, Hans Hoffman, Willem de Kooning, Clyfford Still, and Mark Rothko. Among them as a close friend, theorist, and fellow artist was the sculptor Herbert Ferber. Though less famous today than his contemporaries, Ferber was "a driving force of the New York school", known best for his theoretical contributions and for the style of abstract metal sculpture he developed. In 1949, Clement Greenberg wrote that Isamu Noguchi, David Smith, and Herbert Ferber were "sculptor-constructors who have a chance...to contribute something ambitious, serious and original" to a "new genre" of American metal sculpture. Ferber's work became ubiquitous in American museums and was represented by many public commissions before tastes shifted toward Pop Art, Minimalism, and Conceptual Art in the 1960s.

It was William Rubin who encouraged Herbert Ferber to acquire the present Kota, sharing the enthusiasm for African art which had propelled Ferber's development as an abstract sculptor. Rubin would organize another generational event for the fields of African, Oceanic, Pre-Columbian, and American Indian art with the 1984 publication and exhibition "*Primitivism*" in 20th

Century Art held at the Museum of Modern Art, to which he lent his famous Kota. It is fitting that the most significant work in Ferber's personal collection of African Art would also be a Kota figure, with its refined abstraction and expressive use of metal. Ferber displayed his Kota prominently in the living room of his home on MacDougal Street in Manhattan, alongside his own works and paintings by his famous friends.

Discussing the Ndassa group, which they classified as Group 16 in their landmark publication *L'Art Kota*, Alain and Françoise Chaffin observed: "These pieces are among the most sought after by lovers of Kota art. [...]" One finds sculptures from the Rassmussen, Ratton, Chadourne and Girardin collections that are known the world over." Kota Ndassa reliquary figures have found their way into a number of museum collections such as the Musée du Quai Branly - Jacques Chirac, Paris (inv. n° 70.2010.17.1), as well as in important private collections such as the collection of Heinz Berggruen (see Rubin 1984: vol.I, p. 270). The rarest of these are the Janus, or two-sided Kota Ndassa figures, of which only a handful of major examples are known to survive. These include:

- A Janus figure in the collection of Laura and James Ross, New York, which was formerly in the collection of Georges de Miré, Paris (see *Eternal Ancestors. The Art of the Central African Reliquary*, New York, 2007, p. 257, cat. n° 81).
- A Janus figure in the collection of the Fondation Dapper, Paris, which was collected before 1917 (see *Les Forêts natales, Arts d'Afrique équatoriale atlantique*, Paris, 2017:pp. 98 and 297, cat. n° 212).
- A Janus figure in the Ethnologisches Museum (SMPK), Berlin, acquired from Carl Einstien in 1926 (inv. n° IIIC 33268, see *Eternal Ancestors. The Art of the Central African Reliquary*, New York, 2007, p. 259, cat. n° 82).
- A Janus figure in the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO), Toronto, which was also previously in the collection of Georges de Miré, Paris (see Alain and Françoise Chaffin,

L'Art Kota. Les figures de reliquaire, 1979, p. 210, cat. n° 112).

The Kota Ndassa reliquary figure from the collection of Herbert Ferber is a tour-de-force of Central African sculpture and metalwork, and as a Janus figure is one of the rarest and most elaborate types in the corpus of Kota art. Its scale and richness of color, repoussé, form and volume are undeniably impressive. Its connection to world of avant-garde artists and thinkers in New York confirms the enduring legacy of the artist that created it.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



50 Topoke Shield, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Estimate: 2,000 - 3,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

Topoke Shield, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Height: 41 $\frac{3}{4}$ in (106 cm); width: 18 $\frac{1}{8}$ in (46 cm)

PROVENANCE

G.R. Collection, Paris

Pierre Darteville, Brussels

Olivier Larroque, Nîmes

Private Collection, Paris

Frayssé et Associés, Paris, *Dessins et tableaux anciens;*

Tableaux modernes; [...] *Art primitif*, December 6, 2023, lot 125

Private Collection, Paris

EXHIBITION

Brussels, BRUNEF, Olivier Larroque, *Culture*, 2016

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



51

Songye Power Figure, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Estimate: 100,000 - 150,000 EUR

● Restricted Species

DESCRIPTION

Songye Power Figure, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Height: 31 ½ in (80 cm)

PROVENANCE

Christie's, London, *Art and Ethnography from Asia, Africa, the Americas and the Pacific*, December 1, 1982, lot 196
Private Collection, London, acquired at the above auction
Sotheby's, New York, May 15, 2003, *Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas*, lot 57, consigned by the above
Philippe Ratton and Daniel Hourdé, Galerie Ratton-Hourdé, Paris, acquired at the above auction
Italian Private Collection, acquired from the above in 2003

CATALOGUE NOTE

Owing to the web of artistic exchanges, movements, and influences which spread across Songye territory in the 19th and early 20th centuries, geographic attributions based upon style are difficult to make with specificity. The style of this well-designed and finely wrought male or hermaphroditic power statue is of a style which art historians typically give to the basin of the Lomami River, a major tributary of the Congo River. Notable stylistic features include a body of classic Songye proportions carved integrally on a domed plinth, and a tall, exaggerated cylindrical neck. Especially distinctive in the present figure are the enlarged and heavily-lidded eyes, much wider than they are tall, which are turned down at the outside corners and come upwards at the center of the face to meet the bridge of the nose, giving the figure a solemn expression. Grimaced teeth below counterbalance the “sad” eyes, creating an tension between aggression and compassion. The face is richly adorned with metal tacks, set in geometrical array. The coiffure at the back of the head is a particularly satisfying detail of this sculpture, with vertical rows of layered three-dimensional chevrons, made up of flat facets. The facial features of the present figure, particularly in the eyes and mouth, relate to that of a monumental and highly important power figure previously in the collection of Allan Stone which was sold in 2014 (see Sotheby's New York, *The Collection of Allan Stone: African, Pre-Columbian, and American Indian Art*, Volume Two, May 16, 2014, lot 67 and shown on catalogue cover).

The scale of this accomplished figure suggests it was used as a community, rather than personal, power figure or *Nkisi*. Of the power sculptures he observed while visiting Songye territories in 1939, the art historian and anthropologist Hans Himmelheber (1960: 406) stated: “the *Nganga Buka*, great sorcerers, of which there were only a few among the Songye, have such figures carved by professional sculptors called *Sende* [or *Nsendwe*, a smith]. The *Nganga* then charges them with power to protect the local community, especially to safeguard the birth of children in their territory. All children possibly conceived by invoking the power figure or born while a

particular power-figure reigns receive its name. In 1939, a great number of Kalebwe children were called 'Kima' after the power figure *Yankima*, or 'the Father of Kima'. Once in the world, such a power figure will multiply [...] to such an extent that I found throughout the entire region small *Yankima* statues. But this continues only as long as this *Yankima*'s power is intact. After a while he will be replaced by another power figure (with another name and another personality)."

The magical substances and accoutrements which activated the present figure include a bundle of wooden pegs inserted into the umbilicus, nine neatly-strung rows of blue trade beads around the neck, the aforementioned metal tacks, cowries for pupils, and a large bovine horn curving forward from the top of the head, possibly filled with medicine (*Bishimba*) and allowing the figure to connect to the world of spirits.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



52

Kuba Cup, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Estimate: 4,000 - 6,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

Kuba Cup, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Diameter: 6 ¼ in (16 cm); height: 3 ½ in (9 cm)

PROVENANCE

Georges de Miré (1890-1965), Paris
Bellier, Paris, *Collection Georges de Miré. Sculptures Anciennes d'Afrique et d'Amérique*, December 16, 1931, lot 72
Jean-Claude Bellier (1931-2021), Paris
Binoche and Giquello, Paris, *Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie*, March 21, 2018, lot 58
Galerie Charles-Wesley Hourdé, 2018

EXHIBITION

Paris, Galerie Pigalle, *Exposition d'Art Africain et d'Art Océanien*, February 28 - April 1, 1930
Paris, Espace Visconti, *Une Exposition mythique*, September 11 - 16, 2018

LITERATURE

Marquetty M. V., *Exposition d'Art Africain et d'Art Océanien*, Paris, 1930, p. 19, cat. n° 255
Soupault, P., "À propos de l'art nègre" in *Art et Industrie*, February 1, 1930, p. 22
Locke A., *The Negro in Art: A Pictorial Record of the Negro Artist and the Negro Theme in Art*, New York, 1968, p. 220
Hourdé C.-W. and Rolland N., *Galerie Pigalle Afrique Océanie, 1930. Une exposition mythique*, Paris, 2018, p. 267, cat. n° 255

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



53 Mbole Mask, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Estimate: 100,000 - 150,000 EUR

† VAT reduced rate

DESCRIPTION

Mbole Mask, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Height: 18 7/8 in (48 cm)

PROVENANCE

Pierre Darteville, Brussels, acquired *in situ* with the assistance of Riziki, circa 1970

Philippe Guimiot, Brussels, acquired from the above
Daniel and Marian Malcolm Collection, Tenafly, New Jersey, acquired from the above on December 21, 1984

Sotheby's, Paris, *Malcolm. Volume Two. Arts d'Afrique de la Collection Daniel et Marian Malcom*, June 22, 2016, lot 7

Private Collection, acquired at the above auction

LITERATURE

Neyt, F., *Fleuve Congo. Arts d'Afrique Centrale*, Paris, 2010, p. 81, fig. 38

Schweizer, H., *Visions of Grace: 100 Masterpieces from the Collection of Daniel and Marian Malcolm*, Milan, 2014, pp. 244-245, cat. n° 98

CATALOGUE NOTE

The rites and practices of the Mbole people, who inhabit the central-eastern equatorial forest, remain as mysterious as the works relating to them are rare in collections. In this highly hierarchical patriarchal society, the socio-cultural organization of the *Lilwa* plays an essential role, similar to that of the *Bwami* of neighboring Lega people. It governs relationships and organizes initiations, but is also responsible for punishing transgressions of the society's rules; the most condemnable crime being the disclosure of secrets (Kalala Nkudi, *Le Lilwakoy des Mbole du Lomami : essai d'analyse de son symbolisme*, Brussels, 1979).

Among the few works that reached Europe in the early 20th century, masks and male statues such as the one offered by Sotheby's on May 7, 2016 in New York [1], whose attitude evokes funerary practices reserved for high-ranking initiates (Biebuyck, *Arts of Zaïre*, 1986, p. 242), stand out. With only a dozen recorded examples, these masks form one of the smallest corpora in African art. This mask, which has been part of the Malcolm collection, is one of the most beautiful examples of its type, an inventive and refined masterwork which distills the human face in two dimensional form. The stylized face plays with positive and negative space, contrasting textures, and flat areas of polychromy, resulting in a work of striking modernity.

Several hypotheses have been put forward as to the use of these masks. The absence of vision apertures suggests that these masks were not worn. Bernadette Van Haute-de-Kimpe, referring to testimonies gathered in the field by Pierre Darteville in the 1970s, where he also collected this example, suggests that these masks were substituted for figurines representing a condemned man when he managed to escape, and that they then became part of the "*Lilwa* house". This context would explain not only the rarity of such sculptures, but also the symbolic importance attached to these commemorative objects, which have no mouth: without the possibility of speaking, the initiate must respect the rules of confidentiality protecting the secrets of the *Lilwa* organization.

Within this limited corpus, the present mask stands out for the minimalist beauty of its features and the finesse of its execution, as well as for the great age attested by its deep patina. It is also similar to the one in the Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale (Tervuren, inv. n° EO.1963.11.3), collected prior to 1920.

[1] Sotheby's, New York, *MALCOLM Volume I : New York*, May 7, 2016, lot 7

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



54

Makonde Helmet Mask, Mozambique

Estimate: 7,000 - 10,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

Makonde Helmet Mask, Mozambique

Height: 11 ¾ in (29 cm)

PROVENANCE

Knud Otto Eilertsen (1908-1972) and Rosa Eilertsen (1907-?),
Copenhagen, acquired in Amsterdam in 1950
Laurits Sunde (1910-1979) Collection, Copenhagen, acquired
from the above by 1980
Anita and Jan Lundberg (1929-2021), Malmö, acquired from
the above
Galerie Yann Ferrandin, Paris
Private Collection, Paris, acquired from the above in August,
2015

EXHIBITION

Malmö Konsthall, *Afrikanskt - Inspirationskälla för den
moderna konsten/African Art - A Source of Inspiration for
Modern Art*, March 22 - May 19, 1986
Parcours des Mondes, Galerie Yann Ferrandin, Paris,
September 8 - 13, 2015

LITERATURE

Claeson, I., Högestätt, E. and Lundberg, J., *Afrikanskt -
Inspirationskälla för den moderna konsten/African Art - A
Source of Inspiration for Modern Art*, Malmö, 1986, p. 144
Ferrandin, Y., *Sélection Parcours des Mondes 2015*, Paris, 2015

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



55

Makonde Stopper, Mozambique

Estimate: 3,000 - 5,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

Makonde Stopper, Mozambique

Height: 5 ¾ in (14.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

Yann Ferrandin, Paris
Private Collection, Paris, acquired from the above in March, 2013

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



56

Mask for Malagan, New Ireland, Bismarck Archipelago, Papua New Guinea

Estimate: 25,000 - 35,000 EUR

● Restricted Species

DESCRIPTION

Mask for Malagan, New Ireland, Bismarck Archipelago, Papua New Guinea

Height: 16 in (41 cm)

PROVENANCE

Voyageurs et Curieux, Paris
Private Collection, Paris, acquired from the above in March, 2013

EXHIBITION

Paris, Parcours des Mondes, Voyageurs et Curieux, *Archipel Bismarck*, September 11 - 16, 2012

LITERATURE

Carlier, J.-E., *Archipel Bismarck*, 2012, front cover and pp. 94 - 95, n° 70
Parcours des Mondes, *Catalogue 2012*, Paris, 2012, p. 137

CATALOGUE NOTE

With its remarkably elaborate headdress and iconography, this *Tatanua* mask perfectly illustrates the power of fascination exerted by the arts of New Ireland when they were discovered by Europeans at the end of the 19th century.

Today we have little reliable information on the significance and context of these Melanesian objects. However, the accounts of Europeans such as missionary Richard Parkinson and Elisabeth Krämer, who published an account of her trip to New Ireland in 1907-1908 *Among Art-loving Cannibals of the South Seas*, show that the three main types of representation used in *Malangan* mourning ceremonies - masks, friezes and statues - are the expression of their worldview, but also the projection of social relations, territorial rights and clan membership.

Tatanua masks were worn on the occasion of the important multi-day ceremonies for which Tabar Island is famous, notably the dances at the end of funeral rituals and ceremonies commemorating the dead. Peekel reports that these masks probably represented real people, since they were often called by the name of the deceased during these dances [1]. At the end of these ceremonies, we know that the sculptures and friezes that formed part of the decorum were abandoned in the bush, while the *Tatanua* masks were carefully preserved, proof of the importance attached to them.

The duality of the headdress, different on each side, was intended to provoke a visual shock when the wearer turned. In fact, it consists of two distinct sides. One side is over-modelled with a lime shell decorated with scrolls, while the other is embellished with woven plant fibers. It is also topped by a crest of orange-yellow plant fibers, further accentuating its majesty. This was closely linked to the context in which the masks were used, that of mourning, as Parkinson explains: "this particular hairstyle was obtained when the relatives of the deceased grew long hair, which was then coated with burnt lime and dyed yellow. During the funeral ceremony, the hair was shaved off at the sides, leaving a

crest in the middle down to the nape of the neck [...] the sides were then coated with a thick layer of limestone and various ornaments were produced"[2]. The face, with its tight features, is enhanced by the multiplicity and finesse of the sculpted and painted motifs that adorn it. These also reflect the ideals of masculine beauty in New Ireland : a broad nose with a rounded bridge, sculpted earlobes, very stretched and pierced, and a large mouth set in a square jaw.

Referring to Helfrich's classification [3] of Malagan masks in Berlin's Museum für Völkerkunde, the present mask can be linked to type 1-B, to which the author links twenty-one other masks in the museum's collections. Three of these masks appear to be particularly close to our own : nos. 24, 27 and 28, which feature the same square jaw, rounded nose bridge, identical eyes, long ears and extremely similar scrolls and plant braids covering one side of the headdress.

This *Tatanua* mask perfectly illustrates the iconographic richness of Neo-Irish art, particularly visible in the treatment of facial motifs. It also embodies the skill of an artist who, drawing on the talents of a generation of sculptors, sums up in a single object the complexity of a society and the harmony of its aesthetics.

[1] P. Gerh. Peekel, *Die Ahnenbilder von Nord-Neu-Mecklenburg. Eine kritische und positive Studie.*, Anthropos, vol. 22, 1./2, 1927, p. 33

[2] R. Parkinson, *Dreissig Jahre in der Südsee*, Stuttgart, 1907, p. 647

[3] K. Helfrich, *Malanggan 1, Bildwerke von Neuirland*, Berlin, 1973, p. 62

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



57

Tapa Cloth, Finisterre Mountains, Rai Coast, Madang or Morobe Province, Papua New Guinea

Estimate: 20,000 - 30,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

Tapa Cloth, Finisterre Mountains, Rai Coast, Madang or Morobe Province, Papua New Guinea

Height: 55 in (138 cm); width: 21 ½ in (56 cm)

PROVENANCE

Paul Wirz (1892-1955), Basel, acquired *in situ* in the 1930s
Thence by descent
Baron Frédéric "Freddy" Rolin (1919-2001) Collection, Brussels / New York
John and Marcia (1938-2018) Friede, The Jolika Collection, Rye, New York
Michael Hamson, Palos Verdes, acquired from the above
Voyageurs et Curieux, Paris
Private Collection, Paris, acquired from the above

LITERATURE

Hamson, M., ed., *Between the Known and the Unknown: New Guinea Art From Astrolabe Bay to Morobe*, Palos Verdes, 2016, pp. 298 - 299, cat. n° 163

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



58 Neckrest, Lower Sepik Region, Papua New Guinea

Estimate: 70,000 - 100,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

Neckrest, Lower Sepik Region, Papua New Guinea

Height: 5 ½ in (14 cm)

PROVENANCE

Charles Ratton (1895-1986), Paris

Madeleine Meunier (1921-2009), Paris, acquired from the above prior to 1964

Millon/Christie's, Paris, *Aristide Courtois et Charles Ratton au cœur de la succession Madeleine Meunier*, December 15, 2016, lot 8

Private Collection, Paris, acquired at the above auction

CATALOGUE NOTE

This finely sculpted openwork four-figure caryatid neckrest from the collection of Charles Ratton can be stylistically attributed to the Lower Sepik Region near the northeast coast of Papua New Guinea. It is of particularly endearing and rare iconography: the four caryatids face outward in four directions, each leaning forward with knees energetically bent, with feet standing on the edge of the lower plinth, as if they are about to dive apart. Counteracting that sense of potential diffusion, each figure holds hands with the next, forming a circle of four interlocked spirit figures facing outward. The four figures support a bowl-shaped top element, inverse of the plinth upon which they stand, and both the lower and upper elements are decorated with maze-like abstract geometric relief carving, in a pattern which is schematic but asymmetrical. The whole forms a dynamic, powerfully charged sculptural composition, which is notable especially for the presence of figures carved in the round, separated by a central void. Only a very few neckrests of this iconography have survived, of which this well-patinated example is the finest in terms of sculptural quality, age, and signs of extensive traditional handling.

The legendary dealer and impresario Charles Ratton was a business associate of the French colonial administrator Aristide Courtois, from whom Ratton acquired objects collected in Gabon, including in particular great Kuyu, Mbete, and Kwele works which would later go on to world fame. Through this connection Ratton met the wife of Courtois, née Madeleine Meunier, and after the death of Ratton's wife and Meunier's separation from Courtois, Ratton and Meunier married in 1954. The younger Meunier inherited a group of works from Ratton when they separated in the early 1960s, including the present sculpture, which was sold in 2016 as part of the long-held cache of objects in Meunier's *succession*.

The corpus of related neckrests, identified by Laurent Granier (2016), includes a very similar work possibly by the same hand as the present neckrest in the Brooklyn Museum, New York (inv. n° CUR.87.218.10, Gift of

Marcia and John Friede and Mrs. Melville W. Hall), as well as three other examples of similar iconography. One is in the British Museum, London (inv. n° Oc1951.13.3), another in the Wereldmuseum, Amsterdam (RV1863-169), and a third is part of the cultural heritage collections of the AfricaMuseum, Royal Museum for Central Africa, in Tervuren, Belgium (EO.1979.1.1314, acquired by exchange from the Royal Museums for Art and History, Brussels).

Another neckrest of slightly different style, but with four figures holding hands in the same configuration, was in the collection of Madeleine Rousseau (and sold to Raymond Weilgus by John J. Klejman, then acquired by John and Marcia Friede at Artcurial, Paris, December 11, 2002, lot 11; Friede 2005: vol 2, p. 96, n° 87).

CONDITION REPORT

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



59
Figure, Lower Sepik Region, Papua New Guinea

Estimate: 10,000 - 15,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

Figure, Lower Sepik Region, Papua New Guinea

Height: 11 ¼ in (28.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

William Ohly (1883-1955) Collection, New Barnet, United Kingdom

Thence by descent

Christie's, Paris, *Art Africain et Océanien*, December 11, 2012, lot 35, consigned by the above

Voyageurs et Curieux, Paris

Private Collection, Paris, acquired from the above in September, 2014

EXHIBITION

Paris, *Parcours des Mondes*, Galerie Brimo de Laroussilhe and Voyageurs et Curieux, *Complicité*, September 9 - 14, 2014

LITERATURE

Carlier, J. E., *Complicité*, Paris, 2014, p. 30

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



60

Flute Mask, Ramu River, Lower Sepik Region, Papua New Guinea

Estimate: 40,000 - 60,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

Flute Mask, Ramu River, Lower Sepik Region, Papua New Guinea

Height: 8 ⅞ in (22.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

Dr. Arthur Baessler (1857-1907) Collection, Berlin, acquired *in situ* between 1887 and 1889
 Linden-Museum, Stuttgart (inv. n° LC.5821), acquired from the above
 Mathias Komor, New York
 American Private Collection, acquired from the above in May, 1969
 Sotheby's, New York, *African, Oceanic and Pre-Columbian Art*, May 11, 2012, lot 216, consigned by the above
 Princely Collection, acquired at the above auction
 Thence by descent
 Christie's, Paris, *Shape(s), L'univers des Formes, African and Oceanic Arts*, December 3, 2020, lot 15, consigned by the above
 Private Collection, Paris, acquired at the above auction

EXHIBITION

Paris, Parcours des Mondes, Jean-Baptiste Bacquart, "*L'oeil* ." *Une illustre collection*, September 11 - 16, 2018
 Paris, Paris Tribal, Jean-Baptiste Bacquart, *Provenance. Beauté. Exception*, March 1 - May 1, 2019

LITERATURE

Bacquart, J.-B., "*L'oeil* ." *Une illustre collection*, Paris, 2018, pp. 126 - 127, n° 45
 Bacquart, J.-B., *Provenance. Beauté. Exception*, Paris, 2019, pp. 40 - 41, n° 13

CATALOGUE NOTE

This small, gem-like flute mask was previously in the collection of the Linden-Museum in Stuttgart, Germany, and an inscription on the reverse records in part "Ramu Dr. Bäessler", referring to it having been collected by Dr. Arthur Baessler (1857-1907). The privileged son of a wealthy textile merchant from Saxony, Baessler was an introverted but ambitious gentleman-ethnographer who made several pacific voyages in the late 19th century and contributed a wealth of objects to the museums in Berlin, Dresden, and Stuttgart. Baessler also took photographs of the people he encountered on his travels, and endowed a foundation to support ethnographic studies and a journal, *Baessler-Archiv*, which continues to this day.

The miniature masks of the Lower Sepik and Ramu River regions are luxurious expressions of the distinctive sculptural aesthetics of that region, with classic stylized mixture of human and animal forms, as in the present bird-like mask. Echoing lines circumscribe the abstract shapes making up the face, and the heavy inverted V-shaped brow above slanted eyes in the same configuration lend the mask an appearance of intense ferocity. These small masks are highly refined and were used as ornaments for important sacred flutes. The corpus of such masks extends from examples from the lower Ramu River, indicated as the origin of the present mask by the inscription on the reverse, to the Lower Sepik Angoram and Kopar regions. A group of related masks is in the Ethnological Museum of the Berlin State Museums in Berlin (formerly the Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde, see Heinz Kelm, *Kunst vom Sepik*, vol. III, 1968, cat. nos. 179 - 188). Another mask which is particularly close to the present example, with shorter "beak", was given by Morton May to the St. Louis Museum of Art, St. Louis, USA (inv. n° 38:1977).

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



61

Canoe Prow Figure, Solomon Islands

Estimate: 10,000 - 15,000 EUR

● Restricted Species

DESCRIPTION

Canoe Prow Figure, Solomon Islands

Height: 9 ½ in (24 cm)

SALEROOM NOTICE

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PROVENANCE

James Robert Tyrrell (1875-1961), Tyrrell's Museum, Sydney, circa 1929
Beatrice Ethel Grimshaw (1870-1953), Bathurst, New South Wales
Galerie Serge Schoffel, Brussels
Private Collection, Paris, acquired from the above in January, 2013

EXHIBITION

BRAFA, Serge Schoffel, Brussels, January 19 - 27, 2013

CATALOGUE NOTE

Headhunting, an ancestral practice in the Solomon Islands, finds its most emblematic manifestation in the *nguzu nguzu* figureheads adorning the bow of war canoes. These pieces represent both the warrior spirit and the spirituality of the inhabitants of these Melanesian islands.

These figureheads, carved in the characteristic dark wood of the Solomon Islands, feature the distinctive shape of an anthropo-zoomorphic face, with a protruding jaw reminiscent of a dog's snout. Crowned with a cone, their half-open mouths reveal fearsome teeth, while the hands clasped under the chin give the figure an aura of fierce determination. The large black surfaces, meticulously darkened, contrast with the mother-of-pearl inlays, creating a unique visual harmony that evokes the mystical power emanating from these boats. This contrast, a typical feature of the Solomon Islands' artistic tradition, gives the pirogue a concentration of *mena*, the magical power required to guarantee the success of war expeditions. The shell inlays, drawing on ancestral traditions, echo the warriors' adornments and facial paintings.

Beyond their aesthetic appeal, *nguzu nguzu* have a deeper meaning. Their sensory faculties surpass those of a human, so that, once strapped to the bow of the boat, they can counter any malevolent spirit, including *Kesoko*, who is famous for causing mischief by diverting pirogues or stirring up the natural elements. The *nguzu nguzu*'s dog-like features reflect this vital connection with the animal, helping to flush out enemies and anticipate danger.

This figurehead, originally from the James Robert Tyrrells collection and the museum bearing his name, Tyrell's Museum, in Sydney, later belonged to famous writer and world traveler Beatrice Grimshaw (1870-1953). This ornamentation for the bow of a pirogue features all the characteristic elements found in these objects. Beyond their purely ornamental function, they also embody the potency and protective power they were endowed with in the cultures of the Solomon Islands. The menacing aspect of the figure, with its half-

open mouth revealing its teeth, is further emphasized by the small human skull it holds in its hands, reminding the viewer of the practice of headhunting. Whilst the face and upper arms are covered in the deep black characteristic of the *nguzu nguzu*, the upper part of the skull and lower arms display a worn patina, revealing the natural color of the wood - a testament to its age and intensive use.

CONDITION REPORT

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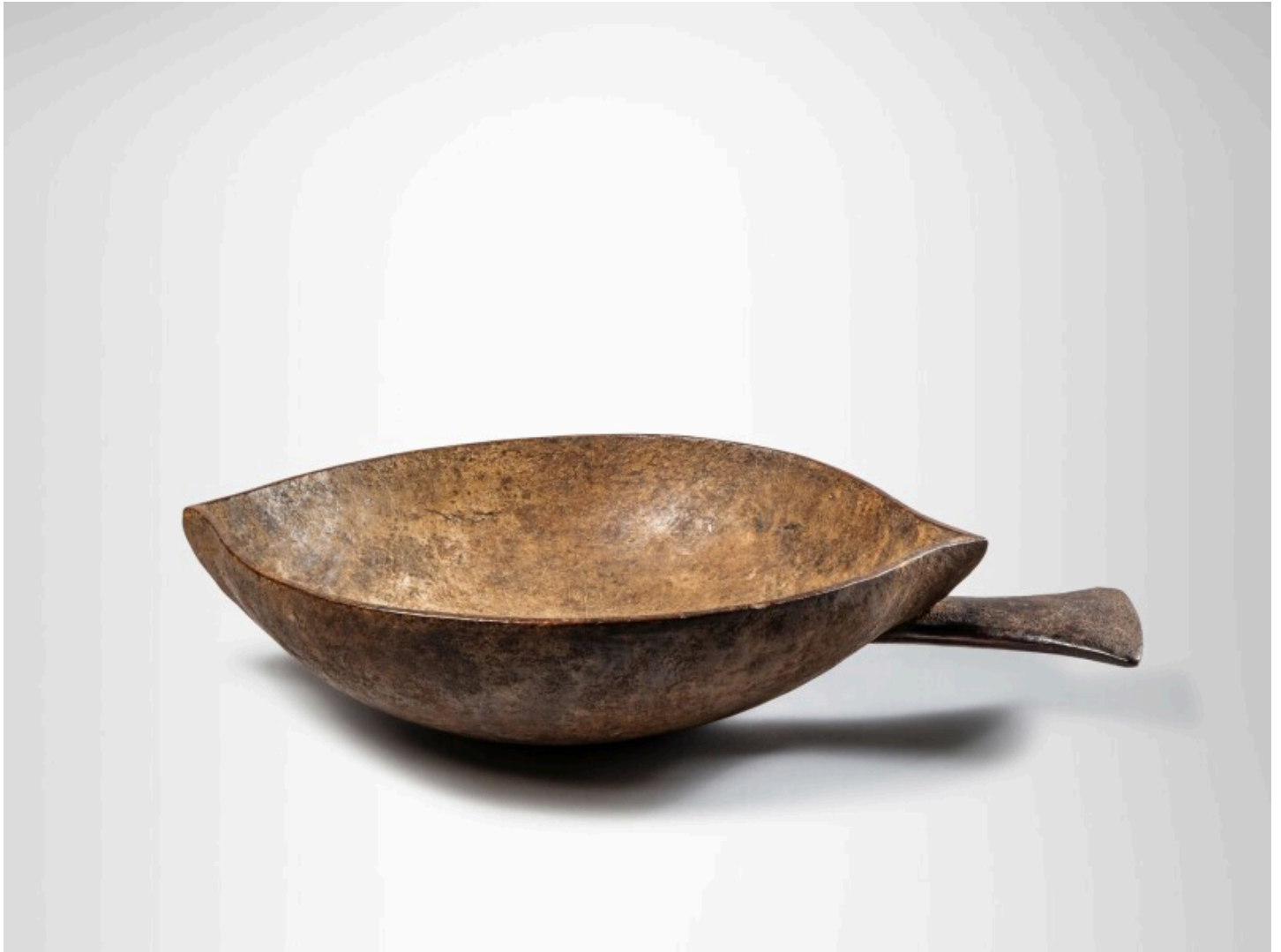
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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



62

Bowl, Papua New Guinea

Estimate: 2,000 - 3,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

Bowl, Papua New Guinea

Height: 24 ½ in (62 cm); width: 14 ⅞ in (38 cm)

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Paris
Fraysse et Associés, Paris, *Dessins et tableaux anciens; Tableaux modernes; [...] Art primitif*, December 6, 2023, lot 124
Private Collection, Paris

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



63

Ornament, Santa Cruz or Solomon Islands

Estimate: 2,000 - 3,000 EUR

● Restricted Species

DESCRIPTION

Ornament, Santa Cruz or Solomon Islands

Height: 6 ¼ in (16 cm)

SALEROOM NOTICE

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PROVENANCE

Frank Reiter, Berlin
Voyageurs et Curieux, Paris
Private Collection, Paris, acquired from the above in 2018

EXHIBITION

Paris, Parcours des Mondes, Voyageurs et Curieux, *Les Enclaves Polynésiennes*, September 11 - 16, 2018

LITERATURE

Carlier, J.-E., *Les Enclaves Polynésiennes*, Paris, 2018, pp. 76 - 77, n° 38

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



64

Maori Pendant, New Zealand

Estimate: 25,000 - 35,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

Maori Pendant, New Zealand

Height: 12 ½ in (32 cm)

PROVENANCE

European Collection, circa 1880
Jacob Epstein (1880-1959) Collection, London
Carlo Monzino (1931-1996) Collection, Lugano
Thence by descent
Sotheby's, New York, *Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas*,
May 19, 2001, lot 53, consigned by the above
German Private Collection, acquired at the above auction
Sotheby's, Paris, *Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie*, June 16, 2010, lot
22, consigned by the above
Princely Collection, acquired at the above auction
Thence by descent
With Galerie Jean-Baptiste Bacquart, Paris, 2018-2019
Private Collection, Paris, acquired from the above in April, 2019

EXHIBITION

London, Arts Council of Great Britain, *The Epstein Collection of
Primitive and Exotic Sculpture*, March 25 - April 23, 1960
Paris, *Parcours des Mondes*, Jean-Baptiste Bacquart, "L'oeil."
Une illustre collection, September 11 - 16, 2018
Paris, *Paris Tribal*, Jean-Baptiste Bacquart, *Provenance.
Beauté. Exception*, March 1st - May 1st, 2019

LITERATURE

Fagg, W., *The Epstein Collection of Primitive and Exotic
Sculpture*, Arts Council of Great Britain, Londres, 1960, n° 196
Bassani, E. and McLeod, M., *Jacob Epstein Collector*,
Associazione Poro, Milan, 1989, p. 152, n° 580
Bacquart, J.-B., "L'oeil." *Une illustre collection*, Paris, 2018, pp.
190 - 191, n° 70
Bacquart, J.-B., *Provenance. Beauté. Exception*, Paris, 2019, pp.
54 - 55, n° 18

CATALOGUE NOTE

"Kati an otaku taonga nui I te pounam"
"May my greatest treasure remain the pounamu",
Te Otatu, chief of the Coromandel region, 1870s[1]

This Maori nephrite *kapeu* ear pendant is probably one
of the most accomplished expressions of the art and
tradition of this New Zealand culture.

Nephrite is undeniably the most precious of all
materials for the Maori, and one of the major symbols of
their cultural identity. For centuries, the Maori have
devoted considerable effort to extracting and carving
pounamu, as they call it, and fashioning the utensils,
jewellery and ornaments or ceremonial weapons that
can constitute the treasure of an entire family, and
which, thanks to its sturdiness and durability, can be
handed down from generation to generation.

Many ancient stories recount the spiritual origins of
pounamu. In most of them, the figure of a *taniwha* (a
type of water spirit) named *Poutini* represents the
protective divinity of the precious *pounamu* sources and
of the Maori people. Most of the deposits are located on
the west coast of the South Island, known as *Te Tai o
Poutini* (The Tides of Poutini) and in the mountainous
regions known to the Maori as *Te Wai Pounamu* (Waters
of the Green Stone). The geological layers of stone are
weathered and eroded by the forces of water, and then,
over time, pieces of varying sizes are transported by the
water to the lower reaches of rivers, where they are
picked up by local people to be carved.[2] "With no pack
animals and unable to use dugout canoes on this
exposed coastline, the Maori had to transport the uncut
ganges on their backs, across high mountain passes
and glacier-fed rivers. The men wore hemp sandals to
protect their feet from the snow and sharp rocks."[3].

In addition to ear pendants, Maori jewellery also
includes *hei matau*, - pendants inspired by the shape of
fish-hooks - and the famous *hei tiki*, worn only by men,
women and children of high lineage. This last type of
jewel is certainly the most emblematic and prestigious
of them all. Ear pendants were either long, straight
kurus, or *kapeus* with curved, crozier-shaped ends, like

the one featured here. Most of these adornments are associated with the artistic heyday of Maori culture, a period known as *Te Puawaitanga*, which spanned four centuries, from 1500 to 1800.

This *kapeu* ear pendant was held in the Jacob Epstein Collection (1880-1959) as early as the 1950s, with part of the collection published by William Fagg in 1960[4]. It then passed into the collection of Carlo Monzino, before entering a famous Middle Eastern Prince's Collection and finally being acquired by its current owner, via Jean-Baptiste Bacquart, following the sale of the latter's collection upon his death. This illustrious provenance is compounded by the object's ancient history, as revealed by the plaque affixed to the Victorian black lacquered wood and red silk velvet base. It provides information on the origin of this pendant. It is thought to have been brought back to Europe as early as 1880 and to have been carved by a Maori chief named Pakahaka who lived in Taranaki. This is most likely where it was purchased during a European man's visit (probably an Englishman) in the late 19th century.

In addition to its striking outline, this *kapeu* ear pendant stands out in the known corpus for the quality of its carving and its size. Its superb sense of balance and proportion borders on perfection. It is also 32 centimeters long, which is quite extraordinary. Some of the largest exemplars of this type - in the British Museum for instance - are no larger than fifteen centimeters[5], while those in the Museum of New Zealand in Wellington are just under twenty[6]. Knowing this it is easy to deduce that this adornment was intended for a very high-ranking person.

[1] *La Pierre sacrée des Maori*, Paris, Actes Sud / Musée du Quai Branly Jacques Chirac, 2017, p. 35

[2] *Ibid.* p. 15 and 20.

[3] Neich, R., « Pendentif en jade. Nouvelle-Zélande. Maori », in Mattet L. (ed.), *Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie, Fleurons du musée Barbier-Mueller*, Paris, 2007, p. 373

[4] Fagg W., *The Epstein Collection of Primitive and Exotic Sculpture*, Arts Council of Great Britain, Londres, 1960, n° 196

[5] Starzecka, D.C., Neich, R. and Pendergrast, M., *The Maori Collection of the British Museum*, 2010, p. 56, n° 338 - 341 and 347, plate 75

[6] In. ME002784/1 and OL002199.

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



65

Pestle, Tahiti

Estimate: 10,000 - 15,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

Pestle, Tahiti

Height: 6 1⁄8 in (15.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

Michel Thieme, Amsterdam
Private Collection, Paris, acquired from the above

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



66

Beater, Marshall Islands, Micronesia

Estimate: 10,000 - 15,000 EUR

● Restricted Species

DESCRIPTION

Beater, Marshall Islands, Micronesia

Height: 10 ½ in (27 cm)

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PROVENANCE

Jacques (1939-2004) and Galila Hollander Collection, Brussels
Christie's, Paris, *Le cabinet de curiosités de Jacques et Galila Hollander*, October 16, 2013, lot 342
Private Collection, Paris, acquired at the above auction

CATALOGUE NOTE

The Marshall Islands are famous for their production of beaters, known in the vernacular as *rikenen* or *triginin*. They were made from wood, and, more rarely, from the shell of giant clams, known by the scientific name *tridacna gigas*. These two types of pounders, made either out of wood or shells, were used in the painstaking process of making mats from woven coconut fiber, and for flattening *pandan* leaves to make cloth. The shell versions were also particularly prestigious. Only prominent families would own them, and they were a treasured heirloom, passed down through the generations from mothers to daughters. These tridacne beaters can therefore be of considerable age.

Giant clams (*tridacna gigas*) are the largest living molluscs, sometimes weighing more than 500 pounds and measuring as much as four feet across. Crafting beaters, which were made from the hinge of the shell, required exceptional craftsmanship. The process involved first shifting the clams out of the water, and then using large stones to break the shell into multiple pieces, which would then be placed in fresh-water ponds. This would cause a gradual disintegration of their surface and the now soft top layer of the shell would be scraped. These last steps would be repeated until the desired shape for the beater was reached.

The function of the pounders was first described by A. Krämer in 1906^[1] : they were used to break pandanus leaves into fine filaments - approximately 2 millimeter wide - , which were then plaited with hibiscus fibers into mats of elaborate geometric design. Such mats, worn by women as well as chiefs, were then burnished with the flat side of the beater, creating a glossy surface.

This Marshall Islands beater is a superb exemplar of this very rare type of object. It can be compared to some of the best-known specimens, including the one sold at Sotheby's on May 16, 2008, in New York, for the substantial sum of \$73,000 (*African, Oceanic And Pre-Columbian Art*, lot 42) or the one kept in the Lindenmuseum in Stuttgart (inv. L I482/305)^[2]. However, the model at hand stands out from the corpus

for its superb overall balance and the harmony of its outlines. It soars with all the elegance and formal simplicity of sculptures by Jean Arp or Constantin Brancusi. The latter in particular may have found in it an inspiration for *Torso of a Young Girl [II]*, circa 1923, now held in the Philadelphia Museum of Art (inv. 1952-61-3).

- [1] A. Krämer, *Hawaii, Ostmikronesien und Samoa. Meine zweite Südseereise (1897-1899) zu Studium der Atolle und ihrer Bewohner*, Stuttgart, 1906, pp. 411-413
- [2] U. Menter, *Ozeanien - Kult und Visionen. Verborgene Schätze aus deutschen Völkerkundemuseen*, Prestel, Munich, 2003, ill. 159

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



67

Axe Head, Micronesia

Estimate: 800 - 1,200 EUR

● Restricted Species

DESCRIPTION

Axe Head, Micronesia

Height: 8 ¾ in (21.5 cm)

SALEROOM NOTICE

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PROVENANCE

Dr. James Spillius (1922-2010), London, acquired *in situ* between 1952 and 1953
Thence by descent
Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury, *Tribal Art (including the Dr. James Spillius Collection)*, September 2, 2015, lot 431, consigned by the above
Voyageurs et Curieux, Paris
Private Collection, Paris, acquired from the above in July, 2018

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



68

Tapa, Samoa Islands, Polynesia

Estimate: 2,000 - 3,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

Tapa, Samoa Islands, Polynesia

Height: 56 ¼ in (143 cm); width: 42 ⅞ in (107 cm)

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Paris
Frayssé et Associés, Paris, *Dessins et tableaux anciens; Tableaux modernes; [...] Art primitif*, December 6, 2023, lot 122
Private Collection, Paris

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



69

Tapa Matrix, Tonga

Estimate: 1,000 - 1,500 EUR

DESCRIPTION

Tapa Matrix, Tonga

Height: 20 ½ in (52.5 cm); width: 13 in (33 cm)

PROVENANCE

Pierre Langlois, acquired *in situ* in the 1960s

Dr. Jean Bienaymé, Lyon

Martin Doustar Brussels, acquired by 2018

Private Collection, Paris

Frayssé et Associés, Paris, *Dessins et tableaux anciens;*

Tableaux modernes; [...] *Art primitif*, December 6, 2023, lot 123

Private Collection, Paris

CONDITION REPORT

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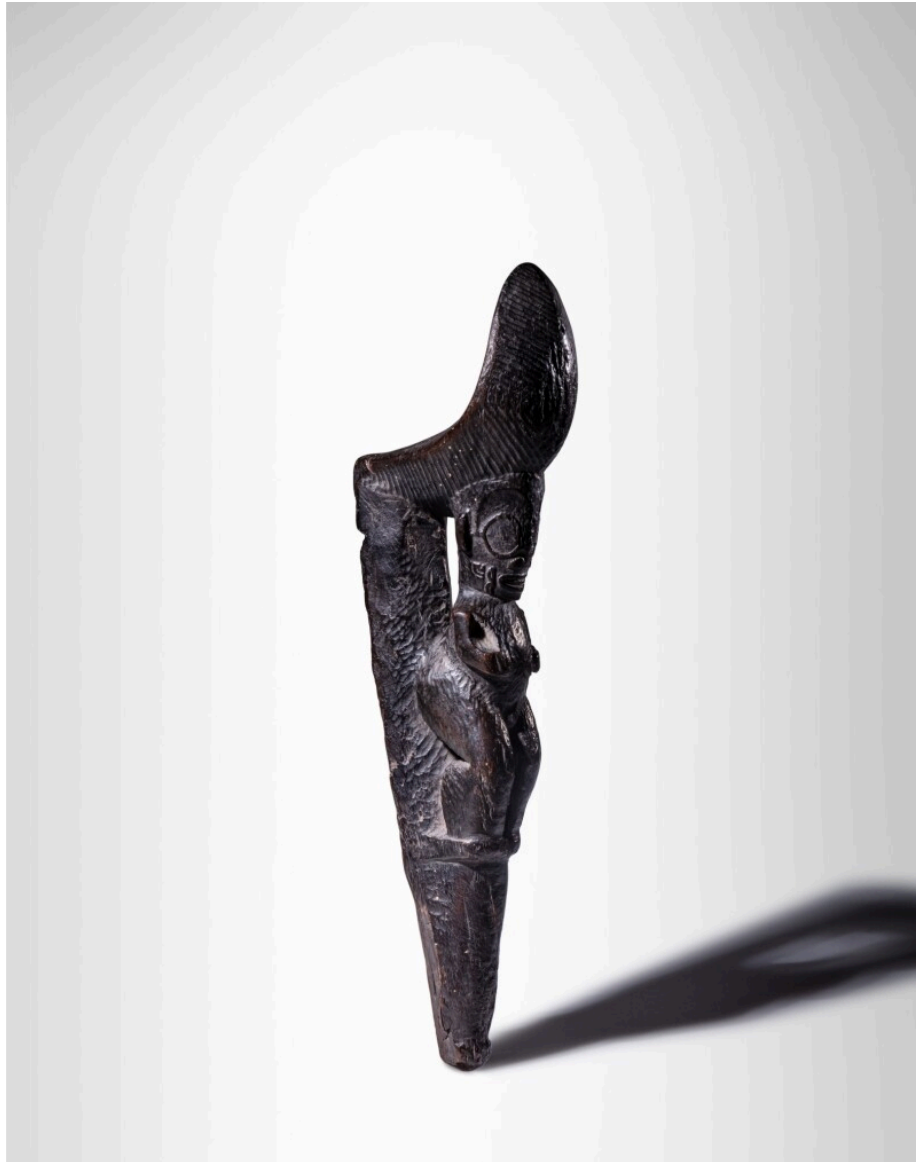
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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



70

Stilt Step, Marquesas Islands

Estimate: 15,000 - 25,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

Stilt Step, Marquesas Islands

Height: 12 5/8 in (32 cm)

PROVENANCE

Jean de Pérusse des Cars (1821-1860), acquired *in situ* during a journey aboard the Eridon as a naval student between 1842 and 1845

Thence by descent

Private Collection, Paris

EXHIBITION

Musée de la Maison de la chasse et de la nature, Paris, *P.I.G (Polynesian Instant Geography). Dormir avec les ancêtres*, September 25 - December 9, 2013

LITERATURE

Healy, P., *Retour d'expédition*, Eindhoven, 2012, n° 13

Peretti, F.-X., *Objets témoins d'expéditions au temps de la marine à voile. Six objets de Polynésie de Jean des Cars (1821-1860)*, Paris, 2016, pp. 26 - 29

CATALOGUE NOTE

German physicist, ethnologist and explorer, Karl von den Steinen (1855-1929) brought back from his 1897-98 expedition to the Marquesas Islands the myth of a young hero and champion who carried with him at all times the stilt steps his father had given him. According to local beliefs, they were the embodiment of the ancestors' energies and presence. They were used for jousting, which took place during funeral ceremonies for high-ranking individuals. Fastened to the stilts with braided coconut fibre ties, these stirrups, known as *vaeake*, were often adorned with *tiki* figures symbolizing the link between the world of the living and that of the dead. The stilt step here features a caryatid *tiki* with a lower body that is symbolically oversized, its hands delicately resting on its belly, while its face is finely sculpted and adorned with scarification marks.

A remarkable patina of use covers the entire surface of the piece, attesting to its age. The unique state of preservation of this stilt step, with only a few scratches on the front, is due in part to its equally remarkable provenance. It was collected between 1842 and 1845 in the Marquesas Islands by Jean de Pérusse des Cars (1821-1860), a French navigator and explorer who completed two overseas journeys in the Pacific Ocean. Born into a family with strong ties to old French nobility, at the age of 14 he was sent to the Royal Sardinian Naval School in Genoa, Italy, where he began his training. An inquisitive and keen explorer, his thirst for adventure was satisfied on his first major voyage to Polynesia aboard the Eridon as a naval cadet, in the years 1842 to 1845. He kept a record of his journey in notebooks - two out of three of which have been recovered. These invaluable written records help us better understand his life and the objects he amassed, including this stilt step - a type of object rarely seen today in such a well-preserved state.

CONDITION REPORT

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



71

Head Ornament and Fish Hook, Marquesas Islands

Estimate: 3,000 - 5,000 EUR

☒ Restricted Species ☐ No Reserves

DESCRIPTION

Headdress and Fish Hook, Marquesas Islands

Length of the headdress: 21 ¼ in (54 cm)

Height of the hook: 3 ¾ in (9.5 cm)

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PROVENANCE

For both items:

Jean de Pérusse des Cars (1821-1860), acquired *in situ* during a journey aboard the Eridon as a naval student between 1842 and 1845

Thence by descent

Private Collection, Paris

EXHIBITION

For the head ornament :

Paris, Musée de la Maison de la chasse et de la nature, *P.I.G (Polynesian Instant Geography). Dormir avec les ancêtres*, September 25 - December 9, 2013

LITERATURE

For the head ornament:

Healy, P., *Retour d'expédition*, Lecturis Editions, Eindhoven, 2012, n° 14

Peretti, F.-X., *Objets témoins d'expéditions au temps de la marine à voile. Six objets de Polynésie de Jean des Cars (1821-1860)*, Paris, 2016, p. 9, pp. 18 - 21 and p. 38

For the fish hook:

Peretti, F.-X., *Objets témoins d'expéditions au temps de la marine à voile. Six objets de Polynésie de Jean des Cars (1821-1860)*, Paris, 2016, pp. 34 - 37

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



72

Staff, Samoa or Tonga

Estimate: 3,000 - 5,000 EUR

☐ No Reserves

DESCRIPTION

Staff, Samoa or Tonga

Height: 41 in (104 cm)

PROVENANCE

Jean de Pérusse des Cars (1821-1860), acquired *in situ* during a journey aboard the Eridon as a naval student between 1842 and 1845

Thence by descent

Private Collection, Paris

LITERATURE

Peretti, F.-X., *Objets témoins d'expéditions au temps de la marine à voile - Six objets de Polynésie de Jean des Cars (1821-1860)*, Galerie Schoffel de Fabry, Paris, 2016, pp. 30 - 33

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



73

Maori Paddle, New Zealand

Estimate: 4,000 - 6,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

Maori Paddle, New Zealand

Height: 71 ½ in (181.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

Emile Deletaille, Brussels

Thence by descent

CONDITION REPORT

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



74

Paddle, Austral Islands

Estimate: 5,000 - 7,000 EUR

☐ No Reserves

DESCRIPTION

Paddle, Austral Islands

Height: 38 ½ in (98 cm)

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Dublin
William Kearney (1939-1998) Collection, Dublin
James Adam & Sons, Dublin, *The William Kearney Collection*,
September 1, 1999
Private Collection, Dublin

CONDITION REPORT

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



75

Kanak Figure, New Caledonia

Estimate: 30,000 - 50,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

Kanak Figure, New Caledonia

Height: 16 ⅞ in (41 cm)

PROVENANCE

Acquired *in situ* by the Maréchal du Logis Charles Auguste Daenes (1864-?), prior to 1903
Thence by descent
Galerie Charles-Wesley Hourdé, Paris, 2018
Private Collection, Paris

LITERATURE

Hourdé, C.-W., *L'Emprise des masques*, Montreuil, 2017, pp. 74 - 75, n° 21
Hourdé, C.-W., *The Voyages of Captain Cook*, Paris, 2018, pp. 34 - 37, n° 15

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



76

Mask, Ramu Delta, Lower Sepik Region, Papua New Guinea

Estimate: 30,000 - 50,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

Mask, Ramu Delta, Lower Sepik Region, Papua New Guinea

Height: 18 7/8 in (48 cm)

PROVENANCE

Kurt Victor Mengers, Berlin
Lair-Dubreuil and Léon Flagel, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, *Belle et importante collection appartenant à un amateur*, November 7, 1929, lot 8, consigned by the above
French Private Collection, probably acquired at the above auction and transmitted by descent
Cornette de Saint Cyr, Paris, *Art Tribal - Arts d'Asie - Documentation*, November 9, 2016, lot 102, consigned by the above
Private Collection, Amsterdam, acquired at the above auction

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



77

Grade Society Figure, Vanuatu

Estimate: 15,000 - 25,000 EUR

△ Sotheby's Ownership Interest

DESCRIPTION

Grade Society Figure, Vanuatu

Height: 67 1/8 in (170.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

John J. Klejman, New York
Estelle and Alvin Abrams, Greenwich, Connecticut, acquired from the above in the 1970s
Sotheby's, New York, *African and Oceanic Art*, November 15, 2002, lot 160, consigned by the above
Private Collection, acquired at the above auction
Sotheby's, New York, *Art of Africa, Oceania and the Americas*, May 13, 2019, lot 104, consigned by the above
European Private Collection, acquired at the above auction

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



78 Tukman Mask, Yuo Island, Papua New Guinea

Estimate: 30,000 - 50,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

Tukman Mask, Yuo Island, Papua New Guinea

Height: 16 in (40.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

Wilhelm Fabricius, Potsdamhafen, inv. n° 529
Überseemuseum, Bremen, inv. n° D-12513, p. 366 of the
Australia and Oceania Ethnographic Collection Index, gifted by
the above in 1911
Walter Kaiser, Stuttgart, acquired by exchange with the
previous in February, 1974
Entwistle Gallery, London
Private Collection, Amsterdam, acquired from the above in
2016

CONDITION REPORT

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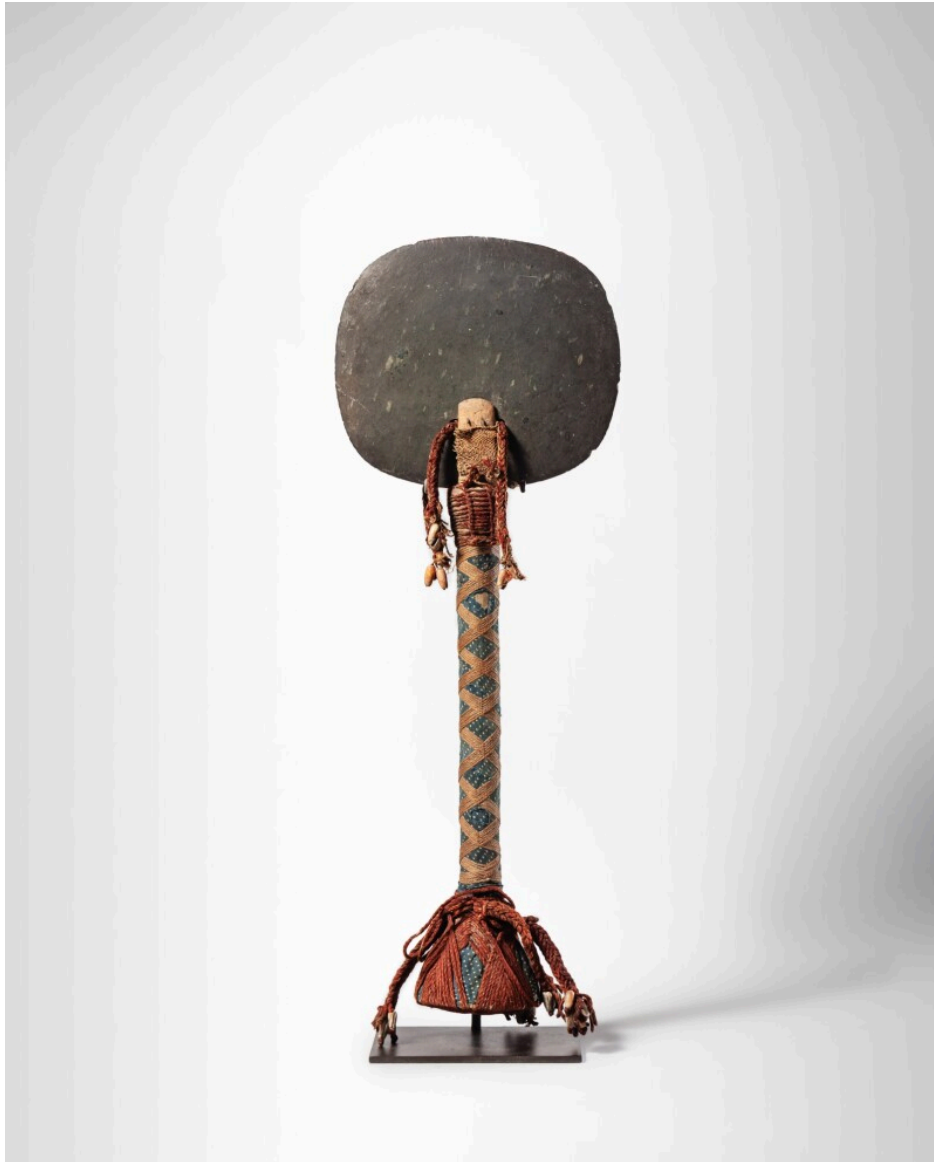
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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



79

Kanak Prestige Axe, New Caledonia

Estimate: 15,000 - 25,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

Kanak Prestige Axe, New Caledonia

Height: 23 5⁄8 in (60 cm)

PROVENANCE

Edmond d'Ortho (1820-1906) Collection
Thence by descent
Gérard d'Ortho Collection
French Private Collection

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



80

Adu Zatua Figure, Nias, Indonesia

Estimate: 10,000 - 15,000 EUR

DESCRIPTION

Adu Zatua Figure, Nias, Indonesia

Height: 16 in (40.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

Jaap Kunst (1891-1960) Collection, Bandung / Amsterdam,
acquired *in situ circa* 1920 / 1930

Thence by descent

Private Collection, Amsterdam

CATALOGUE NOTE

This *Adu Zatua* statue from Nias Island comes from the Jaap Kunst Collection (1891-1960). This musician and music teacher from Groeninge visited Java in Indonesia as early as 1919. He settled in Bandung, which was to become his home for some ten years, during which he studied the local culture, particularly music. He made numerous recordings throughout the Indonesian archipelago, notably of the famous gamelan, and amassed an important collection of musical instruments. Jaap Kunst was one of the pioneers of ethnomusicology, which he taught at the University of Amsterdam from 1942. In 1958, he became a member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences. After becoming an internationally recognized authority on ethnic music, he was named Honorary President of the American Society for Ethnomusicology.

It was during one of his stays on Nias Island, where he went to make recordings, that he acquired this *Adu Zatua* statue. On this island, all wooden statues are called *Adu*, and are linked to the supernatural world and the spirits of the dead, whose receptacle they are. These elaborately carved, relatively large figures were intended for the elite of the community. This type of statuette was placed in visible locations in front of the house window, on an altar or hanging from the roof. The crouching figure holds two ritual pestles in his hands, a sign of his cultic role. It wears numerous ornaments, including an impressive headdress, a characteristic earring and the traditional twisted *Kalarbabu* necklace. These reflect the deceased's high social status, wealth and prestige. The quality of the sculpture, with its skillfully balanced proportions, and the artist's talent, visible in the details, make this statuette a remarkable example of *Adu Zatua* figures.

CONDITION REPORT

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



81

Dayak Bahau Lid, East Kalimantan, Borneo, Indonesia

Estimate: 3,000 - 5,000 EUR

☐ No Reserves

DESCRIPTION

Dayak Bahau Lid, East Kalimantan, Borneo, Indonesia

Diameter: 5 1/8 in (13 cm)

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Jakarta, 1990s
Edmund Grundner Collection, Austria

CONDITION REPORT

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



82

Nuu-cha-nulth (Nootka) or Makah Club, British Columbia or Washington

Estimate: 7,000 - 10,000 EUR

● Restricted Species

DESCRIPTION

Nuu-cha-nulth (Nootka) or Makah Club, British Columbia or Washington

Height: 23 ½ in (60 cm)

PROVENANCE

Pierre (1900-1992) and Claude (1928-2018) Vérité, Paris Christie's, Paris, *Collection Vérité. Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et d'Amérique du Nord*, November 21, 2017, lot 118
Private Collection, Paris, acquired at the above auction

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Arts d'Afrique, d'Océanie et des Amériques

Paris | 12 Dec 2024 | 03:00 PM CET



83

Two Spoons, Haida or Tlingit, British Columbia or Alaska

Estimate: 3,000 - 5,000 EUR

● Restricted Species

DESCRIPTION

Two Spoons, Haida or Tlingit, British Columbia or Alaska

Heights: 10 5/8 in (27 cm) and 9 3/4 in (25 cm)

PROVENANCE

For the larger:

Private Collection, Paris
Galerie Dodier, Paris
Private Collection, Paris, acquired from the above in
September, 2014

For the smaller:

Mathias Komor, New York
Galerie Dodier, Paris
Private Collection, Paris, acquired from the above in
September, 2014

EXHIBITION

Parcours des Mondes, Galerie Dodier, Paris, September 9 - 14,
2014

LITERATURE

Dodier, L., *Regards Premiers*, Paris, 2014, pp. 21 - 22, cat. n° 9,
and pp. 49 - 50, cat. n° 23

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doceanie-et-des-ameriques/deux-cuilleres-haida-ou-tlingit-colombie](https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2024/arts-dafrique-doceanie-et-des-ameriques/deux-cuilleres-haida-ou-tlingit-colombie)

